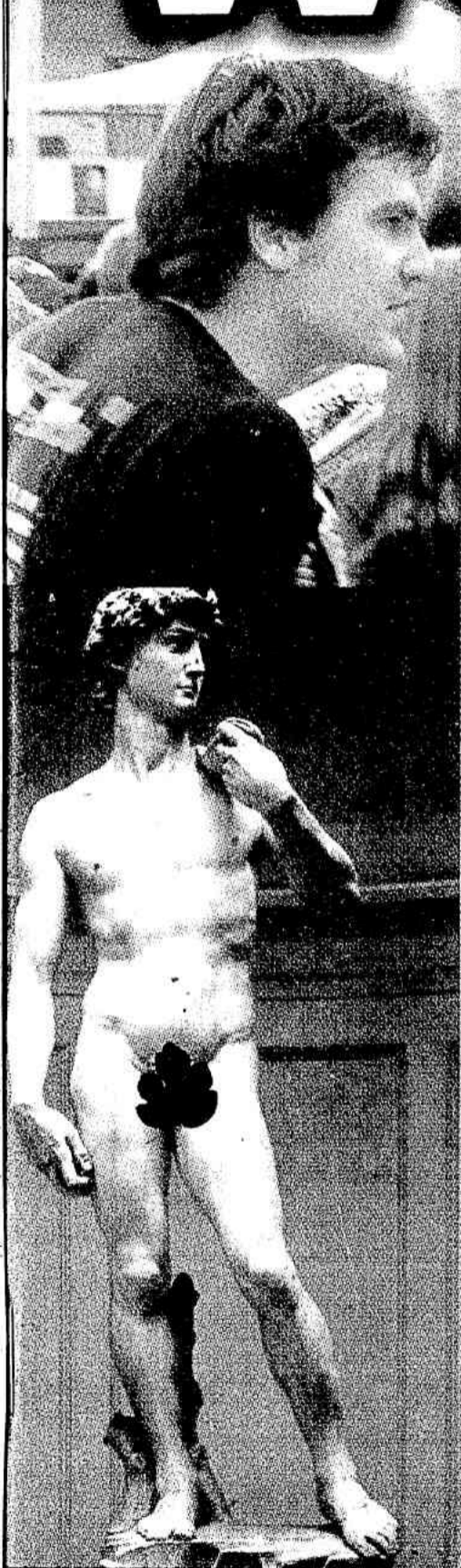


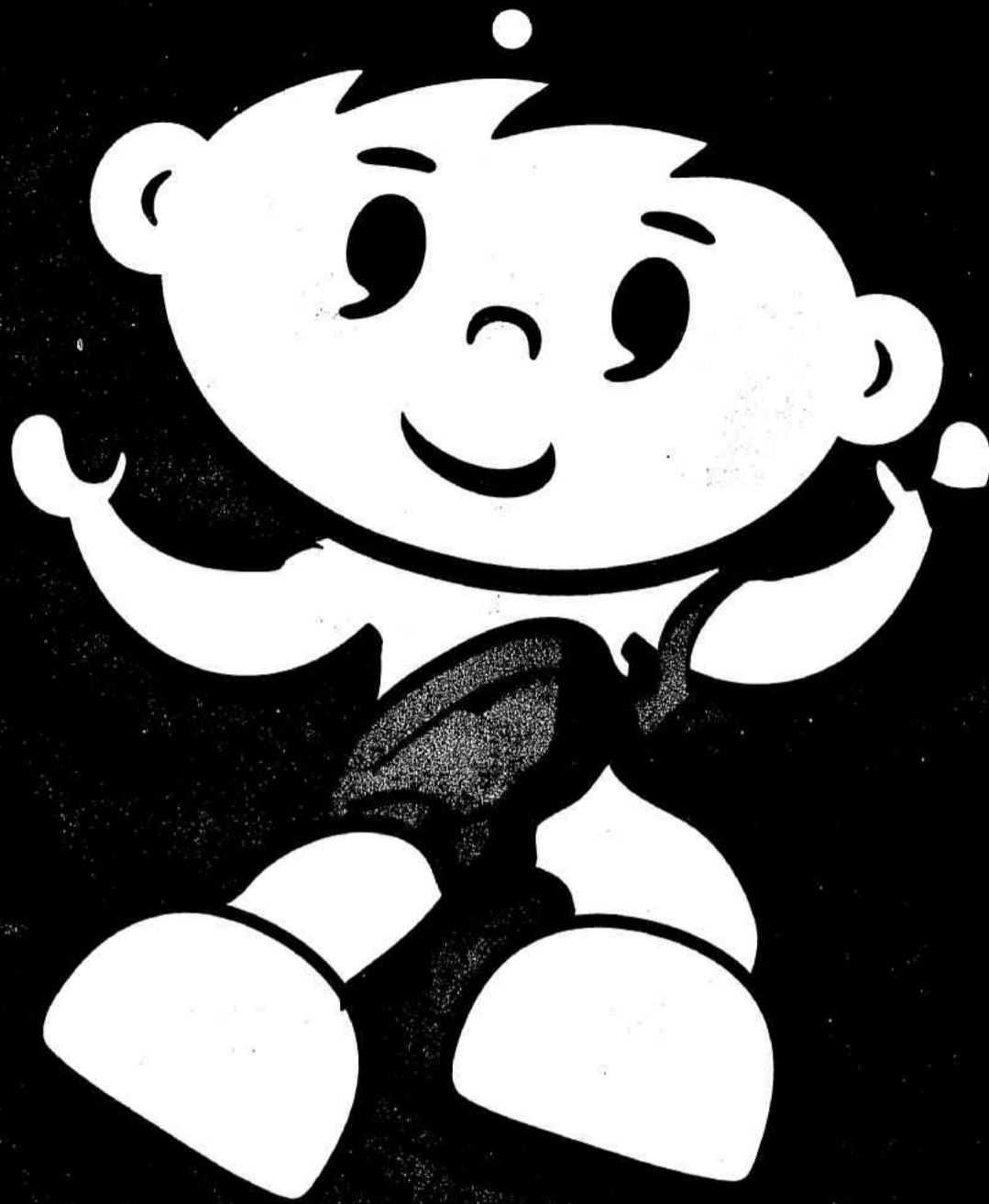
Volume 58 • Issue 2 • April 2006

woroni



FREE SPEECH

Socialist Alternative stunts ❖ More ANU Student Watch
❖ Middle East travelogue ❖ Interviews with DBC Pierre,
Robert Fisk, & Hilltop Hoods ❖ What to know when you
rent ❖ Is sex a social obligation? ❖ and much more



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may	june	july	aug
sept	oct	<i>spring out</i>	dec

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for an HIV test

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woroni

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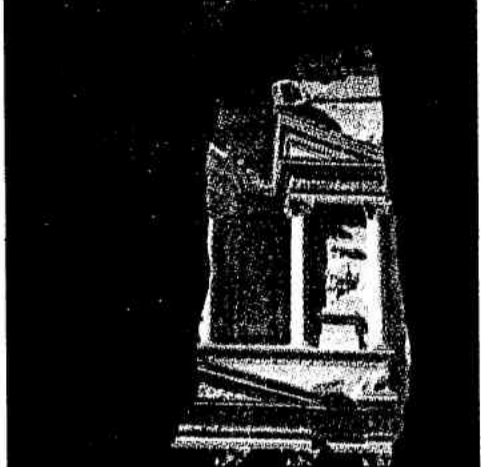
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Woroni is the official publication of the ANU Students' Association. Opinions are not necessarily those of the editors or ANUSA.

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From the editors

Welcome to *Woroni's* second edition for 2006, packed with reviews, comedy and good old ANU Student Watch (keeping ANUSA accountable and angry, and the Legal Officer busy).

You probably gathered from the cover that quite a lot of this edition is devoted to censorship in its various forms.

Whether it be Tony Abbott being yelled down by malodorous socialists, David Irving being locked up more than a decade after denying the Holocaust, or enraged Muslims attacking Danish embassies after the printing of pictures of the Prophet, it's an issue that deserves debate and is relevant to Australian society.

With the Cronulla riots generating questions about multiculturalism, local imams calling bin Laden a good dude, and the Australian media generally sitting by and letting it all flow past, what can and cannot be said in Australian society has serious implications for everybody.

Pitiful though *Woroni's* contribution to debate may be, the censorship of sexist, racist, homophobic or defamatory articles raises questions about how we manage information and how dumb your average student is.

Let's be clear that we aren't out to publish material that is offensive and has no value. It's not in our interests to piss off readers without good reason, and frankly we both have lives outside of *Woro-*

ni, lives that could easily be affected by publishing offensive pieces.

When we publish controversial material it's because we think it contributes to debate, expresses a valid point of view, or is simply interesting to your average student.

Funnily enough we don't think that covering up naughty words protects people or stops bigots and homophobes thinking the way they do. Like it or not, crazy people exist and frankly the best protection you can have is knowing they exist and what they think.

No one is likely to metamorphose into a bigot after reading *Woroni* or to have their lives fundamentally changed from reading an article by someone whose views differ from their own.

The simple reality is that censorship never works in practice.

At best it obscures more serious issues and at worst it leads to people being complacent. If there really is a bunch of people who hate Muslims wouldn't you rather know that they exist than be protected by the omnipotent black Texta of the Director of Student Publications (the official body that censors *Woroni*) – an oh-so-accountable trinity comprising the Student Association's Women's Officer, Queer Officer, and President.

Maybe you disagree, but if so write us a letter and tell us why our mag or views stink. The worst thing that can happen is it'll get censored for being naughty and, hey, at least that gets you street cred, doesn't it?

James & Toby

Thanks: Domino's Pizza delivery drivers for their patience in the face of adversity; Datta; Claudia Newman-Martin for her continuing support of *Woroni* and her snappy office attire; Jeremy "the Ninja" Farrell for making the world a safer place; other on-campus publications for reminding readers to accept no imitations; ANUSA CRC for having quick and concise meetings; Kevin Rudd – only he knows why; De Bortoli Old Port for 55 standard drinks; Marlboro cigarettes – for their smooth, rich taste; James' shoes for being flammable

No thanks: Matt "Fatty" Laing for being the world's laziest man; submitters who didn't submit; those who submit articles without understanding basic rules of English; defamation laws for making the world a more boring place; Baber "you wanna fight me?" Butt (and yes, YES, we do); Dunhill cigarettes; people who pleasure themselves in ANUSA's toilets (we can hear you...); Academy bouncers for punching first and thinking later; the guys from Bruce Hall that attacked our friends (James "Chuck Norris" Robertson is coming for you...)

Issue 3 deadline:
**Saturday,
8 April**

Letters, articles,
news, photos...

See p. 4 for contact details



ANU news

Mid-East money 'damaging' ANU Islam Centre objectivity

The ANU has been criticised for allowing funding from Middle-Eastern sources to weaken its researchers' objectivity.

The *Herald Sun's* rightwing flagship columnist Andrew Bolt lambasted the ANU in that paper for accepting a \$2.5 million donation to its Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (CAIS) from the brother of the Emir of Dubai and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Sheik Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Not only does Sheik Hamdan Al-Maktoum receive a senior lecturer's chair at the centre named in his honour, but the UAE now fills two of fifteen places on the centre's governing committee.

Mr Bolt suggests that these donations compromise the centre's ability to objectively report on Middle-Eastern policy, pointing to the example of Dr Matthew Gray – the ANU's Sheik Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Senior Lecturer – who has failed to criti-

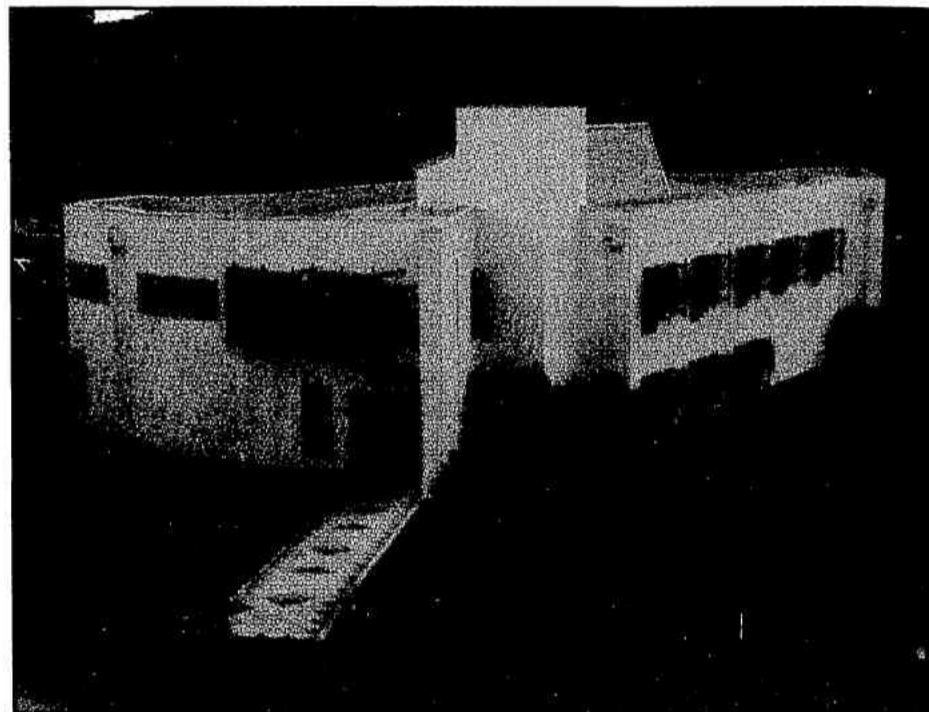
cise autocratic governance in the UAE.

A \$600,000 grant from the Iranian theocracy to teach Iranian studies and \$400,000 from the Turkish Government are some of the other past donations to the centre.

The centre's activities are guided by an advisory board whose patron is Sheik Hamdan and whose fifteen members include a former UAE ambassador and a representative of Sheik Hamdan's foundation.

As part of a sweeping critique of what he termed the centre's unquestioningly pro-Arab, pro-

Below The Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies



Islamic leanings, Mr Bolt took particular aim at the CAIS director, Prof. Amin Saikal, the brother of Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister, for what he termed a teaching style that advocated "Muslim victimology".

Student Charter weekend praised



ANUSA has held its annual Student Charter weekend.

President Laura Crespo praised the meeting, held on 25–26 February and attended by elected ANUSA representatives.

She said it would enable the rapid exchange of ideas from all sections of the association.

That may possibly allow them to be implemented some time later this year.

The meeting also allowed the Students' Association to respond to the university's strategic plan, a document from the Vice-Chancellor outlining the ANU's strategic direction from now until 2010.

Ms Crespo cited the response as an important part of the representative process.

☐ Hecklers derided ☐ Participating ANUSA Education Officer quits

Socialist Alternative hecklers stop Abbott O-Week debate

Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott faced down university protesters during an open forum at the ANU during O-Week.

Mr Abbott had been invited by the Students' Association to meet students and discuss issues such as voluntary student unionism and the abortion drug RU486.

To the disappointment of the roughly 300 students in attendance, most of whom seemed keen to grill Abbott on his positions, the discussion was interrupted before it could begin by a dozen Socialist Alternative (SA) members who used megaphone to stop the Minister from being heard.

For ten minutes the crowd of students, organisers, and guest Tim Brunero (of *Big Brother*) tried to reason with the socialists, offering them opportunities to debate.

When these efforts failed, the

crowd began to boo, yell invective, and chant, "Shut up! Shut up!"

Eventually, about 200 students formed a ring around Mr Abbott as he tried to speak over the loud and verbally abusive protesters, who continued their chanting, making almost all the Minister's answers inaudible.

James Higgins, one of the protesters and the ANUSA Education Officer at the time, went on Triple J's Hack radio program without informing ANUSA of his intentions.

He was quoted as saying: "We're not gonna let Tony Abbot think."

Mr Higgins claimed that "Most students were there to heckle him [Abbott]"; *Woroni*, however, can confirm that most people wanted to hear the Minister and repeatedly called on SA to desist.

Steve Cannane, the presenter of Hack, cut Mr Higgins off air for

a short while, to demonstrate how SA had silenced freedom of speech. He also suggested that the group would appear to be either fascists for opposing free speech or lacking the intelligence to handle a debate with the Minister.

Mr Higgins has since been criticised for his conduct as Education Officer.

He has resigned that office, citing health reasons.

Debate fiasco

More in this issue:

- *Wit*—James' time in ANUSA p. 18
- *Pics*—Revolutionary life p. 19
- *Letter*—SA ruined my afternoon! p. 13
- *Pro op-ed*—Why SA did it p. 20
- *Anti op-ed*—VSU sucks, but so did SA's behaviour p. 21

Jackie Chan centre

The ANU is set to establish a new medical science centre named after action movie star Jackie Chan.

The move follows a substantial donation made by the celebrity in honour of his late mother to the university's medical school.

The centre aims to promote interest in medical science within the community. It will feature medical and scientific displays, as well as viewing windows into the university's labs.

Jackie Chan grew up in Canberra with his family as a refugee from the Chinese civil war. He returned to Hong Kong to pursue an acting career, while his parents chose to stay in the ACT.

Bollywood, meet Canberra

Canberra mightn't be known for its film industry, but a team of ANU students has been working to turn that around.

For four months the students have been working on an as-yet untitled film inspired by 1970s Bollywood musicals.

It is set in the nation's capital and aims to showcase the talents of the ANU's Centre for New Media Arts and the School of Music.

The project has received limited sponsorship from both the Canberra Council for International Students and the ANU Students' Association.

The film was made entirely with the support of volunteers: nobody in the hundred-strong cast and crew received payment for their efforts.

The 35-minute film has already secured two screenings at the 2006 National Multicultural Festival, with more likely to follow.



ANU News continues »



7

« ANU News continued

On yer bike... to cut emissions

The ANU has launched a new campaign aimed at reducing its level of car exhaust emissions.

In the sort of scheme that could only be found at a university, the ANU has acquired a fleet of 20 brand-new mountain bikes available to staff as a substitute for the university's car fleet.

Each bike comes complete with a helmet, pannier bag, lights, and an on-board computer to monitor usage patterns.

ANU Environmental Manager David Carpenter said the scheme was aimed at reducing use of the university's car fleet. An estimated 25% of fleet usage is for internal travel.

The scheme is currently in its trial phases.

It is hoped that, if successful, sixty to eighty bicycles could be

brought into circulation.

All factors point to the plan being a success.

The rate of bicycle use amongst faculty is already quite high, with

many staff providing their own bikes for intra-university travel, while the School of Psychology already has an informal bike fleet in operation.



Graduate to be next chancellor

Dr Allan Hawke has become the first Australian National University graduate to wear the ANU's Chancellor robe.

The largely ceremonial role will see Dr Hawke conferring degrees, though he will also chair meetings of the ANU Board.

He will be one of a few chancellors worldwide to give one of their children a degree. His daughter, Stephanie, is finishing a psychology degree with honours.

ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Chubb said that Dr Hawke brought to the University outstanding skills to build on the successes of Emeritus Professor Peter Baume, who served as Chancellor for more than ten years.

"Dr Hawke is an outstanding example of an ANU alumnus who has gone on to build an impressive

career and made a great contribution to Australia and its place in the world community," Prof. Chubb said.

"It is a proud moment for the university to see one of its own appointed to the chancellorship. The ANU community welcomes Dr Hawke back."

Dr Hawke was a student at ANU from 1966 until 1976 and holds a Bachelor of Science with First Class Honours and a Doctor of Philosophy.

He said the standards at the ANU had increased markedly since he attended.

"There's question marks about whether I would get in now," he said.

"It's a bit of an irony that the ANU's reputation is better appreciated on the world stage than it is

in Canberra and Australia.

"Students around Australia certainly understand and we're getting more of the best and the brightest."

Dr Hawke said the university was developing a strategic plan to take it to 2010.

"I want to emphasize that this is Australia's national university.

"We want to make sure that we continue to engage with the big ideas and issues facing the Australian nation," he said.

Dr Hawke took up the position after thirty-two years of public service, including a two-and-a-half year stint as High Commissioner to New Zealand.

He led three Commonwealth departments - Veterans' Affairs, Transport and Regional Services, and Defence.

"All the News We Have to Print"

UNION

chaff

La Presidenta

Laura Crespo

So much to report and so little room to report it in!

Let's start with the ANUSA specifics. Resignations have been officially filled, I would like to welcome to the team Nithya Sambasivam as General Secretary, Lexi Spies as a Law Faculty Representative, and David Sykes as Education Officer.

O-Week

Claudia Newman-Martin, the Social Officer, tells me that the O-Week aftermath is an expected \$5,000 surplus. This extra cash should go a long way to filling the

gap of the O-Week budget next year when VSU takes full effect.

ANUSA Student Charter

On the weekend of 25-26 February, elected reps got together to write the Student Charter. Some very important issues such as lecture taping and WebCT were discussed, and while the final document won't be presented to the Vice-Chancellor and the University Council until June, many of us are already hard on the trail to following up the outcomes that were decided.

Another important issue that came out of the Charter outline was the role that general representatives play in ANUSA.

I think it's important that every elected representative feel as though they have achieved more than simply raising their hand in meetings. Presently there is very little scope for gen-reps to achieve during their time in office; later this month, however, I will be meeting with them and we'll be looking to build portfolios and writing some better defined duty regulations.

Clubs and Societies

The Clubs and Societies Committee has started to affiliate and give out grants.

As a result of the GSF allocation for 2006, which is the full \$500,000, the clubs, societies, and productions allocations of \$8,000 will remain the same for this year.

Next year will be a different story all together, but we're working on it and should have something workable next semester. Any clubs wanting to (re-)affiliate or apply for grants should book an appointment with the committee in the front office.

University Retreat

I was asked to go along to the University Retreat in O-Week.

Again, a lot of important issues were discussed that have direct impact on the way learning is perceived by students, most importantly the concepts of research-led education and problem-based learning.

There were plenty of group discussions on the new college system and the university community.

We also got some great brainstorming done - be on the look out in the next couple of months for "The Last Lecturer" and, of course, the inaugural Autumn Festival.

Important OGM on 23 March

Finally, let me all remind you that the next Ordinary General Meeting of the Association will be on Thursday, 23 March at 2 p.m. in the Karmel Rooms in the Union Building (above the Uni Bar).

This meeting is an important one as we will be passing the constitutional changes that will make us comply with that dirty legislation: VSU. See you all there! ■

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ANU STUDENT WATCH

Our main correspondent reports that sex romps have left him wearied and calloused. As such, his associate **Hack of All Hacks** reports from the Student Union front.

Greetings, fellow avid and vulture-like watchers of our beloved Students' Association!

Allow me to introduce myself. **Hack of All Hacks** at your service. Along with my dear friend at ANU Student Watch, I will strive to give you the lowest of the low-downs and the dirtiest of the dirt from the building that so many CV-hunting loony student polities call home.

Much to my delight, this first article has been bolstered by the quality of emails that ANU Student Watch has received over the past few weeks. We thank all contributors for their extraordinarily detailed information on the most recent high-octane and high-methane goings on.

I received a ton of emails about the first two meetings of ANUSA, which seem to have been packed with a lot of loud voices, lopsided votes and hurt egos. In summary:

Socialist Education Officer quits

By far the biggest splatter came when ANUSA Education Officer (or "Socialist Alternative Education Officer" as he introduced himself on Triple J) James Higgins chucked a tanty and resigned from his post after only one week of service.

He seems to have been upset by the fact that a large crowd of students – when given a choice between listening to Tony Abbott

speaking about VSU and listening to him scream "Fuck off, Liberal scum!" through a megaphone for twenty minutes – chose Abbott. My sources say the hot tip for replacement is some guy called Harry who apparently likes sticking up posters and chanting about Iraq, too.

It remains to be seen whether the strangely quiet Labor Left are building for a big push to retake their former department, after the red hordes overran it midway through last year.

Misplaced Labor Right machismo

In what is fast becoming a tradition for the Labor Right, the perennial

The problem with the UC...

... is that it's not much of a "U", just like most of them, says **Saleem Hussain**

"The sum of the intelligence of humankind is a constant. Population increases."

How true these words are.

I don't know if any of you have ever heard of the eighty-twenty principle. If you haven't, then you should jump off a very tall building. 80% of the world's intelligence is possessed by 20% of its people. Population increase, thus indicating that the 80% is being spread across more and more people, hence, a greater dilution, if you like, of intelligence.

Intelligence may or may not be a constant. However, given the structure of secondary and tertiary education systems (not only

ours, but the world's), I would tend towards thinking that the reason we feel it is a constant is due to organised education.

Damn commies

Take those socialists for instance. They believe in a wonderful theory that society should be run by everyone, that we should be "democratic" and "socialist".

Bollocks to that! Can you imagine if this world were run by Rick Kuhn?

Even in such a society, a small ruling elite are the ones in charge. Look at the Romans. At its peak, the Roman Empire controlled

between 50 and 100 million people, all with a core civil service of 150. Presumably, these 150 people would be the elite of society, an oligarchy of sorts. Surely a society whereby rulers are those smarter than you is better than one where every man with a door knob for a brain is allowed their say?

A more recent example

A perfect example is the push in the United Kingdom and, latterly, Australia to prevent secondary schools from selecting students based on their academic ability.

Intelligence, it seems, is not a highly valued commodity, nor

losers sauntered into an election with all the macho arrogance of [redacted] and left the count with their ballots between their legs. Only this time it happened not once but twice in a week!

On the first occasion, they presented an ex-South Australian hack, Alex Rafolowiz, to challenge the confirmation of interim Gen Sec Nithya Sambasevam. The victory plan appears to have revolved around fooling the dominant capital-"I" Independents into voting for him, by getting him to say that he too was "independent".

Unfortunately, it failed when one of the ten or so Independents who met him during last year's NUS conference unmasked the hoax. Keep trying, guys!

The second slip-up came when the Right tried to run [redacted]

[redacted] Andy Hargrave against the eminently more intelligent and less sweaty Lexi Spies for Law Faculty Representative. Once again, the Indy-dominated

Council failed to fill in their nomination forms backwards, handing the Right a loss. The famous number-crunching faction may be losing its skill for mathematics, leaving them without either a policy platform or the numbers to enforce it.

Further fireworks may unfold for the Right on Union Board, as their college vote-magnet Tim Slattery is rumoured to be after the chairmanship when incumbent Dave Sykes resigns. The real question will be whether extremely chubby powerbroker Ryan Hamilton sides with him or the obnoxious Shobaz Kandola, who is rumoured to be making no friends within his own caucus.

Indy office bearers' challenge for Logie

I'll end on an email which details a rather [redacted] between ANUSA Treasurer Michael Atkins and Social Officer Claudia Newman-Martin. Remember folks, these two were elected on the

same Indy ticket last year:

Chief:

It seems there's an increasing degree of acrimony between the treasurer Michael Atkins and the social officer Claudia N-M. Atty has been slow to provide Claudia with invoices for O-Week, rubbing salt in the wound by dissing O-Week directors Josh G-C and Mark Smyth for being slack. Claudia has come back in characteristically catty fashion

The future is bright

Hopefully this situation will unfold to provide my colleague with some pages for the next *Woroni*. In the meantime, I encourage all peeping Toms with spare time to write to <anustudentwatch@hotmail.com> and give us enough artillery for the next salvo.

Till then,
Hack of All Hacks ■

one which is allowed to prosper. Grouping intelligent people with the dregs of society has been proposed with the ostensible aim of giving all students a "fair go". But fair to whom, exactly?

It may also soon be illegal for any school in the UK to select applicants by interview. Intelligence is not merely gaining a high UAI. Schools cannot choose students based on intelligence, or personality. Thus the elite will not be able to reach their potential, surrounded by those of an inferior nature.

Yet another Labor cock-up

The worst thing that happened to this country was when the Labor government introduced the Dawkins Reforms with the stated aim of making a university educa-

tion "accessible" to all.

This process seemingly involved turning every second Gold Coast TAFE and Queanbeyan technical college into a fully fledged "university".

UC is a prime example. Allowing every idiot a university education and degree significantly reduced the value of such degrees. Furthermore, courses underwent a process of "dumbing down" to make way for those people who lacked the brains for academically challenging work.

No offence, but what's with all the multiple choice questions in exams these days? I suspect it's to cater for the increasingly large number of international students with less than a solid grasp of English. I have nothing against people who are non-native English speak-

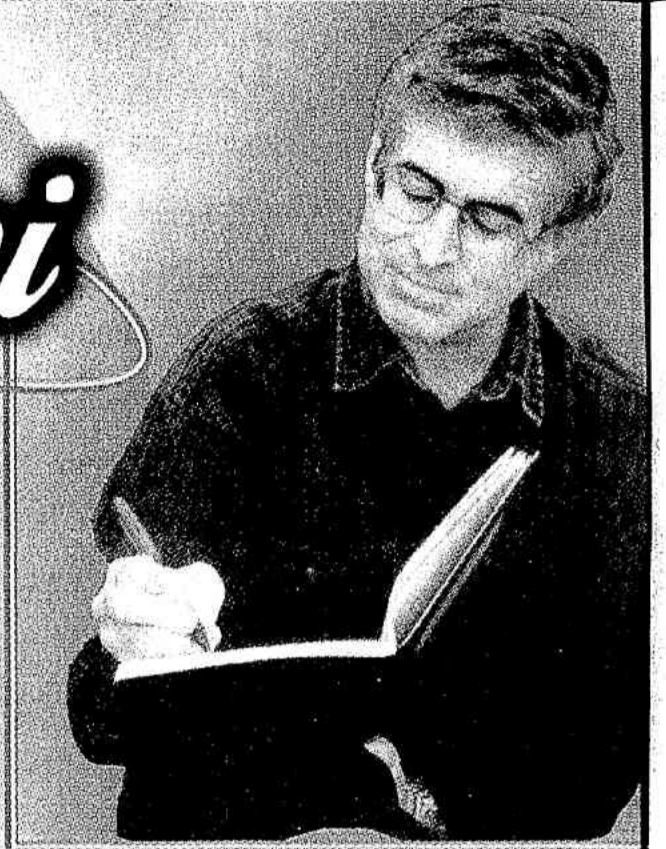
ers. But surely they should be made to conform to a reasonable standard of English if they're being assessed in an English speaking university?

These days, universities are becoming less and less like institutions for higher learning and becoming closer to something resembling degree production facilities.

Don't misinterpret me. I'm not saying that stupid people should not have a chance. They should, as much as anyone else, but currently, stupid people are given more of a chance than those with brains larger than that of a gnat.

Those who possess intelligence aren't given enough opportunities to prosper. Society is run by an elite, and it is society who fosters that elite. So let's make them. ■

Dear Woroni



Name thyself, Anon!

For all the aggression of her rant, Miss Anonymous (oops, should that be Ms?) doesn't have the balls to actually take credit for her drivel; either Miss Anonymous is too modest or too insecure.

To this I say: put up a name or shut up! If you want to use our student magazine as your soapbox, have the courage to claim what you say as your own instead of hiding behind a pseudonym!

If *Woroni* is going to continue publishing articles that sound suspiciously like they belong in *Ms. Magazine*, then please, do some of the following: let us hear from feminists who aren't cowards, who have intelligent comments to make and who aren't the out-of-touch-with-real-women type.

Of course, if you can't find the above feminists, and the team at *Woroni* still thinks it is necessary to dedicate ink and paper to radical feminists, I would recommend printing the best suggestion for an article on feminism that I have come across: it would be titled "Feminist Thought" and would be followed by a blank page.

Brittany Bennett

Daddy's paying

Congrats on the devious juxtaposition of your socialist recruitment "ad" with leftie VSU spiel.

My upper-middle class sense of humour appreciates it, however that same fact means that I don't really give a toss about VSU, and feel you wasted six pages of your inaugural issue covering the topic – you know, since Daddy pays the GSF and my Law fees anyhow. Except for union food, I have to subsidise that myself, on my

non-existent wage (ahaha, that's a funny word, "wage").

If VSU ups the price on pasta and lattes, then let it be known that I'm anti-Howard too, and intend to campaign for the privileges – ahem, I mean rights, of course – of bourgeois victims!... That is, if I'm in a revolutionary mood, otherwise I'll just recline by the poolside and sip my martini.

Veronique

Woroni better than last year's efforts

Great mag that actually tells us what is going on around the place. It's funny and a zillion times better than the last year's crap.

Looking forward to the next one, which I will happily buy if you lose your funding.

Morgan

NUS wankers: show us your budget

If anything, Toby Halligan and Susannah Patton are too kind in the last issue ("From Hell's heart it stabs at thee").

There are two types of wankers who attend NUS and still believe in it – Labor Left and Labor Right. The only real difference is the Left will tell you why students aren't entitled to the NUS national budget of several million dollars, while the Right will lie to you about it and either promise to send it to you, and not return your emails, or tell you (falsely) it's on the website.

I speak from long personal experience. Concealment of the budget is not mere negligence, but deliberate

policy, in the same vein as their rules preventing the use of recording devices at the Conference.

It is a frightening image of pathological greed and corruption when members elected to represent students will lie without hesitation to their constituents, and seemingly care only how to use their roles to further their careers in the Labor Party.

The silver lining of VSU is we finally get rid of such creatures. If they are accountable, I call them out here and now. Provide your budget to *Woroni* or on your webpage.

Jeremy Farrell

NUS factions serve a good purpose

I'm writing in response to Toby Halligan and Susannah Patton's article "From Hell's heart it stabs at thee", published in your last issue.

Factions – what is a faction? A number of people with similar beliefs and ideals who group together to make those ideas a reality. All organisations have factions, whether they be formal or informal (politically we call them parties).

I will concede that at NUS they have a huge effect on the operations of National Conference. Why did Susannah and Toby feel they got nothing out of last year's conference?

Because they do not belong to a faction.

For years this campus has been run by students who call themselves "independent" yet by pure coincidence vote exactly the same way every time.

Every year they con your vote out of you under the idealistic guise of "following their consciences".

Bullshit. Already this year the "independents" elected on the Synergise ticket have voted as a block at every meeting.

I may have some serious differences of opinions with the socialist, Labor Left, Liberal, and Green groupings on this campus, but I respect one thing about them above all else: they have the guts to stand up and say what they believe.

At NUS no delegate can be aware of every other student at the conference and thus it is difficult to pick the best person for a particular job. Factions provide a way for students to elect students they may not know but who they can be assured have similar ideologies.

Sorry, Toby and Susannah, but next time admit to your politics and maybe you'll start to understand.

*Yours in Unity,
Jamila Rizvi*

ANU Student Unity Convenor

Woroni's gross sexism

For anybody out there who thinks sexism is a thing of the past, think again. Just look to the last issue of your own student newspaper, since there was a disgusting level of sex-

ism in the "ANU Student Watch" section of *Woroni*.

The anonymous author of "ANU Student Watch" gave us a raft of supposedly "funny" little blurbs in which the women in ANUSA were described and joked about in sexist terms. Its mockery ranged all the way from discussing how well they baked cake, to how sexually attractive the author found them; from who they've dated to accusations of sleeping their "way to the top".

There is barely a hint of their politics, and no hint of taking most of them seriously.

It's also worth noting that the men described in the article were not discussed in terms of their sexiness or how good they are in the kitchen. Criticisms of them were at least partially political.

While the editors did censor a few lines of text (I shudder to think what originally might have been said), what remained was nonetheless a load of apolitical sexist trash. This is the sort of stuff that should not be in our student newspaper.

For anyone who thinks this is simply a matter of abstract offence, or believes that women's oppression is a joke, it's time to think again - or frankly, to shut up.

Harry Paternoster

Socialist Alternative ruined my afternoon

During O-Week I had the privilege of seeing some politicians arrive at our campus and talk to us - including the evasive Mr Tony Abbott, the man who was too afraid to come to Sydney Uni. ANU must be held in high regard indeed!

This was our one chance to take it in turns to have a chat with a high-ranking federal minister who is central to a number of con-

troversial topics.

I'm proud to say that my fellow students asked some very intelligent questions, and deported themselves with dignity, often putting the Honourable Minister for Health on the spot, and responding wittily to his practiced rhetoric.

Well, some of them did. There was one particular group, however, who do not believe in freedom of speech for politicians who have actually made the time to come and talk to us (whether he listened or not, who knows), and who did not want to make the most of this occasion, and who thought the best way for Mr Abbott (or "Tones", as he likes to be called) to spend his time at ANU was to listen to abuse.

Now don't get me wrong; I'm as much in favour of women being able to choose what they do with their bodies as anyone else. I also agree that VSU may spell the death for student activities and services on campus.

Screw this "user pays" bullshit. I might well say I am a socialist.

But I want to distance myself from the aforementioned group who spoilt this event for everyone else there. I'm talking about a group called Socialist Alternative.

Instead of posing important questions for Tony Abbott, this group yelled over the top of him through megaphones, and continued to chant their slogans even while other students were trying to speak and ask questions!

"Racist, sexist, anti-queer, Liberals are not welcome here"? A bit exclusionist, don't you think guys?

Yes, we know we can hear Abbott speak every day in the media. No, he didn't say anything new, and I didn't really expect him to. But we had a chance to speak to a federal minister, and ask him questions, and respond to his answers in front of the media. And you FUCKED IT UP!

Luke



Left Some are combating *Woroni's* creeping sexism more vigorously than others

Debate, not hate: when censoring *Woroni* is bad

Alex Douglas asks if the Students' Association has used its infamous "black Texta" too liberally in articles promoting views outside the mainstream

To what degree should articles published in *Woroni* be subjected to censorship by the Students' Association?

As a case study, I would like to look at what happened to James Doig's article in the last issue. Doig listed a number of sexual practices which, he claims, "[p]eople believe that they are exercising... freedom" when they engage in.

The list followed: "masturbation, sexual promiscuity, [and] ...", with the next word blacked out (see snippet, opposite page top left).

It is clear that the activity referred to is one which defines the sexual identity of a particular vulnerable minority within the student body, and censoring the word is presumably a gesture intended to protect this minority from being singled out for criticism.

This censorship is irrational...

There are three issues here.

■ The first is that it is not particularly hard to deduce what the blacked out word is, and who, therefore, the minority in question are. This makes the gesture of censorship appear to be either tokenistic or a gratuitous show of power.

■ The second is that Doig's article is not a stream of uncalled-for abuse; it reads as an argument expressing an opinion and giving evidence (of a kind) to support it.

The distinction between mere abuse and argued opinion is an important one because the responses open to a person who is subject

to one or the other are different in each case. One can respond to, criticise, or otherwise engage with an argument. One can do none of this with abuse; the only responses to abuse are to respond in kind or to ignore it.

An opinion can certainly be as hurtful as an abusive statement, but in the former case one can turn one's pain into something productive by publicly engaging the aggressor.

■ The third issue is that the group Doig represents (though not necessarily with its approval) is itself a vulnerable minority.

This is important, first of all, because that minority status and vulnerability must (for the sake of consistency alone) be taken into account as much as the vulnerability of other minorities.

It is also important because a section of that minority often portrays itself as standing up against the tyranny of the majority.

I would note, for instance, Timothy Caddey's article of last year whose argument for the Intelligent Design theory traded very much on the suggestion that it is rejected as a matter of our conservatism and not its own invalidity. I tried my best to argue against that suggestion, but of course this is a matter of influence, and any excessive use of the black Texta on the opinions of Caddey and Doig's minority plays directly into the hands of the bid for silenced muckraker status. Doig, anyway, is far more scurrilous in his conspiracy-theorising, claiming that

we "are being deceived by a dark force which attempts to take beauty and twist it into a falsified imitation of truth". Censors' black Textas can be suggestive of dark, truth-hiding, forces.

... which isn't condemning censorship altogether

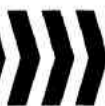
All of this implies that there are certain risks involved in a gesture like that of censoring Doig. On the other hand, I do not at all mean to say that there is no basis for what ANUSA did.

My editorial panel believes that *Woroni* should be a genuinely open public forum where hurtful opinions have their place. The trade-off is that these opinions should themselves be subject to public criticism. Our hope is that those bitten will not simply nurse their wounds in silence.

Even a public forum comes with its limitations. As I said, abuse has no place in any public forum, open or not. Neither do comments akin to yelling "Fire!" in a crowded theatre.

But even narrowing down acceptable contributions to a public forum to those that make criticisable assertions about what is the case is not enough.

Someone once asked me, when I espoused my belief in open discussion, whether somebody who fancied eating people should be given unlimited access to public forums to give graphic explanations of his point of view. And there is something obviously obnoxious about



Surrender isn't true freedom

People are often radical these days over issues such as political freedom and the preservation of human rights. What happened to the right to say no, to choose what we want? People believe that they are exercising this freedom in the form of masturbation, promiscuity,

the willing submission to and entertainment of disordered sexual appetites. But they are being deceived by a dark force which attempts to take beauty and twist it into a falsified imitation of truth that leads only to utter unhappiness and despair.

Catholic Church
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The Church
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suggesting that a public debate on whether women deserve to be protected from pornography should allow all the evidence to be made open to public examination.

Ideological differences between *Woroni* and ANUSA

Still, there is a clear difference between *Woroni's* guiding ideology and ANUSA's. ANUSA's job is not to promote public forums; it is to provide varying degrees of care to the student body.

Homosexuals - I hope I can reveal the censored word now - are not in the same position as other young adults expressing opinions. They are vulnerable to abuse and rejection at all levels of their lives. They may be confused and sensitive about their sense of identity. Moreover, Doig's argument did not seem to be dramatically affected by the exclusion of his moral condemnation of homosexuality.

But we still must account for the fact that Doig, and presumably other members of his minority, feel that they have a basis for their point of view. It is possible, as my partner pointed out to me, that the "debate" about whether homosexuals are evil and morally responsible for their inclinations is simply bankrupt and outdated.

James Doig's article on promiscuity was censored. Was it a fair example of preventing *Woroni* from publishing a hateful piece, or was it something less admirable?

But one must be careful here. I take

there is reasonable argument that the Bible declares homosexuality evil, and that Doig and others genuinely believe this. There is a strong pragmatic case against dismissing the value of this evidence too vigorously. The public implication of the unworthiness of the Bible as a source of truth seems itself to be the abuse of a minority. It is to subject the cherished views of some to public ridicule, since it is a dismissal and not a criticism.

One may protest that the evidence is only dismissed where its content has the potential to hurt others. But one should also note that denying Doig's views a public hearing also denies other Christians, who may feel misrepresented, the chance to criticise or correct his statements. To deny any aspect of Christian thinking publication reinforces the counterculture status many Christians already think they have, and thus drive even deeper a division among the student body which can only be harmful in the end.

I am not, at this point, comfortable in drawing conclusions on this issue. I hope that my comments can open up some discussion. The final thing I would like to point out, however, is that there is a clear danger in the differing ideologies of *Woroni* and ANUSA.

"*Woroni* should be a genuinely open public forum where hurtful opinions have their place. The trade-off is that these opinions should themselves be subject to public criticism. Our hope is that those bitten will not simply nurse their wounds in silence."

A public forum is justified in allowing offensive views to be expressed only on the basis that it will publish equally offensive criticisms. As soon as discretion (beyond that made on the reasonable grounds given above) begins to be exercised, *Woroni* will become something other than a public forum. It will become something which promotes the interests of certain groups over others. There is nothing morally wrong with this, but there is something morally wrong about doing so while maintaining the façade of a public form. I think *Woroni* has a rather less than distinguished recent history, and suspicions that it is a clubbish, insular, and irresponsible institution would not require much encouragement to emerge.

So I believe that *Woroni* and ANUSA will have to decide whether this publication is to be an open forum or a resource for promoting a common ideology, one we take to be reasonable, fair, and supported by the majority, but nevertheless not universally inclusive. If we choose to do the latter, we need to say we have done so. And I, for one, would find that disappointing. ■

Holocaust denials spur hate

Ben Sakker Kelly argues the jailing of David Irving for Holocaust denial is a valid restriction on free speech to aide the greater good

David Irving is the man of the moment in Austria.

To understand where he is today, we need to look back. Born in 1938, he failed to graduate from a physics degree and was rejected by the Royal Airforce as medically unfit, moving to Germany and working as a steelworker. Back in Britain, he made his first foray into history by writing *The Destruction of Dresden*, which characterised the Allied bombing of that city as "the worst single massacre in European history".

In 1968 his academic rigor was legally questioned for the first time, after he was successfully sued for libel by a participant in the events he described in *The Destruction of Convoy PQ17*.

His most famous and controversial book, *Hitler's War*, was written in 1977. The book was built on the premise that Hitler never sanctioned the genocide of the Jews during WWII.

He was eventually completely discredited as an academic in 2000, when he attempted to sue Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt for libel after she branded him a Holocaust denier. The judge agreed with Lipstadt, ruling against Irving and labelling him "a racist, an anti-Semite, and an active Holocaust denier".

His most recent conviction arose from a previous Austrian visit in 1989, when he claimed in a number of speeches that that "the gas chambers in Auschwitz never existed". This line was repeated in Canada two years later, where he said:

"I don't see any reason to be tasteful about Auschwitz. It's baloney, it's a legend. There are so

many Auschwitz survivors going around - in fact the number increases as the years go past, which is biologically very odd to say the least. I'm going to form an Association of Auschwitz Survivors of the Holocaust, and Other Liars, or ASSHOLS."

The trial sparked a series of commentators to protest that, whilst Irving's views are despicable, it is a fundamental principle of Western liberal democracy that we should not punish someone for espousing a position the majority disagrees with.

The people arguing this line (some of them children of Holocaust survivors), claim that imprisoning Irving will only make him a martyr. They see the best way to defeat his historical fabrication as exposing it in the eyes of the public, through free and fair debate. But a journalist in the *Scotsman* newspaper had another way of approaching the question. He wrote:

"There can be no such thing as absolute freedom of speech, for very good reasons... The aim of a liberal democratic society must be to achieve a balance of freedoms, rather than to assert the primacy of one over the other."

Using this paradigm, let's put David Irving's freedom of speech to the test against possible flip-sides for the wider community.

Free speech vs. incitement

Even the defenders of David Irving's rights did not give an unqualified defence of free speech.

After arguing strongly against the Irving conviction, Peter Singer in the *Jerusalem Post* admits that

there was a time when Austria's laws were acceptable:

"In the aftermath of WWII, when the Austrian republic was struggling to establish itself as a democracy, it was reasonable, as a temporary emergency measure, for Austrian democrats to suppress Nazi ideas and propaganda. But that danger is long past. Austria is a democracy and a member of the EU... there is no longer a serious threat of any return to Nazism in Austria."

This may be correct at a micro-level, but the works of Holocaust deniers do not dissipate at the borders of Austria. Just look at the Middle East, where such materials are used to build national mythologies of Holocaust denial. In fact, adoption of European anti-Semitism into mainstream Middle-Eastern culture has reached levels of complete saturation.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a nineteenth century forgery by the Tsarist secret service which purported to be a Jewish plot for global domination, is now a best-seller in many Arab countries.

A 41-part Egyptian TV series was recently broadcast across the Middle East, based on the book. Amongst other things, it graphically depicts rabbis as they kill Christian babies for Passover bread, which was a classic medieval and Nazi libel against the Jews.

A poignant example came on Iranian TV, with a panel of "experts" referring to the book as a primary historical source:

"But even if we assume [the Holocaust] happened... the Zionists, according to their Protocols, wanted to control the world, and

they have not given up this idea. They are using various means, such as the Freemasons, or the Bahá'í."

Most recently, Iran has given shelter to a number of European Holocaust deniers who are fleeing trial. In the words of President Ahmadinejad, they have been asked to present a conference which will "talk to people, examine documents, and let people know the findings of their research about the Holocaust myth".

Irving's claims are mirrored in many facets of this rhetoric. Take this recent news report:

"Speaking from his cell, [Irving] asked BBC News why, if such a programme existed, 'so many survived'."

Now compare it to "Dr" Majid Goudarzi from the TV panel:

"If you want to buy a television in Germany, they take 20 percent tax from you in advance. Some of that tax is on account of the crematoria, the existence of which is in doubt... The money goes into the pockets of victims who do not exist - because, after all, if they perished, there would be no survivors. So it goes into the pockets of the Zionist regime."

The logic is incredible and bears no analysis. The results, however, are very important. Newer enemies of the Jewish people are using the corpus of "academic" evidence produced by Irving and others, to comprehensively delegitimise the Holocaust through media, political debate, and education systems. By doing this, they are also attempting to delegitimise the state of Israel, reverse victim roles, and clear the way for scapegoating and ominous further action. In the words of President Ahmadinejad:

"The establishment of the Zionist regime was a move by the world oppressor against the Islamic world... As the imam said, Israel must be wiped off the map."

Popular culture has also been harnessed, with Ahmadinejad

somewhat hypocritically declaring that Iran's response to the Danish cartoons of Mohammed would be to launch a competition for the best satirical Holocaust cartoons. Eager entrants have surfaced in countries as various as Brazil, Bulgaria, China, France, the UK, and the USA.

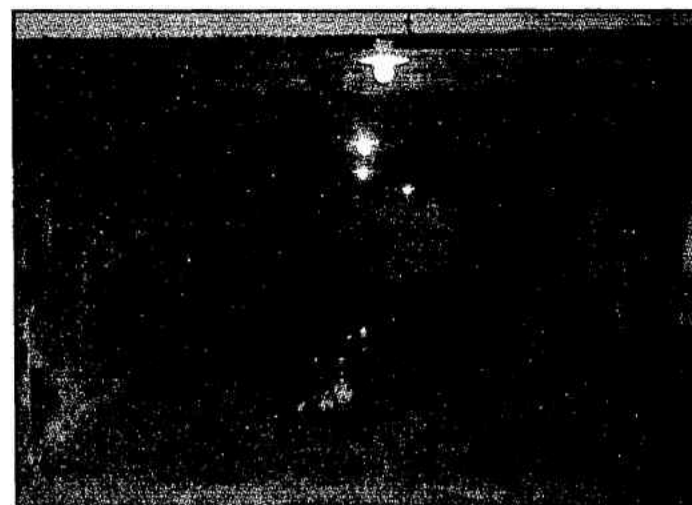
So the premise of Peter Singer's argument comes full circle. Even if Austria is no longer a country in which such public debate leads to mass violence, there are a host of others in which it does. This is why the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide criminalises "direct and public incitement to commit genocide".

So is the freedom of a group of intellectuals to fabricate an ideological excuse for mass violence more important than the harm it can do in the hands of millions of brainwashed and uneducated disciples?

Free speech vs. other concerns

In other words, is the ability of a citizen to claim and publish any conjecture as historical fact more important than the integrity of historical study? More important than preventing defamation and slander? Is the freedom of a person to call Auschwitz survivors frauds more important than the right of those survivors to escape psychological trauma, as in the case of Australian survivor Kitia Altman when she was confronted with Mr Irving on *A Current Affair*? Mrs Altman wrote:

"My personal experience of confrontation with David Irving, on 16 February 1993, was equal in its horror only to my other experience, that of selection in Auschwitz. There, my life was endangered by the faceless, cold bureaucracy of evil. Here, I had the feeling I was fighting for my life again, facing the cynical cruelty of the power of a lie..."



"When we Jews add our concerned voices to the issue of banning Mr Irving from coming here, we are accused of 'lobbying'. When Mr Irving is not allowed to spread his lies and incite violence and hatred, he is 'denied freedom of speech'.

"Is freedom of speech about lies or justice? In a democracy you have to be able to prove your accusations with evidence acceptable in a court of law. Mr Irving has merely been denied the freedom to slander and we Jewish survivors, once again, have been denied the support of the free world."

Freedom of speech is a critical right to defend in our liberal democracy. The response of most ANU students to a small group of protesters who tried to silence Tony Abbott during O-Week shows how dearly that right is held, even for those whose opinions differed with the speaker.

However, when the line of free debate is crossed and when the right to freedom of speech is over-ridden by other concerns is not readily identifiable.

Some of the best antidotes can be non-legal and even humorous, such as a new competition by Israeli artists to prove they can make better anti-Semitic cartoons than the Iranians. To find right response will require a pretty frank public discourse and, as with most things these days, a fair amount of sacrifice to achieve the safest result for society. ■

Ave atque vale, James

James Higgins quit as ANUSA's Education Officer for health reasons, but he will be long-remembered for his role in the Tony Abbott debate fiasco. **Matt Laing** reminisces about the reign of this Socialist Alternative sharpshooter.

James Higgins wasn't your smartest man. He wasn't the wealthiest, or the prettiest, or terribly competent. He didn't wear sensible clothes or sell third-party insurance. He didn't have "qualifications" or "experience".

But he had something much more important than all those things – values.

James stood for morals and beliefs. Now, I know that morals and beliefs don't count for much in this modern world of "iPods", "Ashlee Simpson", and "polio vaccines". But I rise here to tip my hat to Mr Higgins, who wasn't afraid to do what he thought was right... even though it was clearly insane.

Among the bourgeoisie

James was an exuberant, playful youth who abounded in a comfortable, middle-class upbringing in suburban Australia.

It stands to reason then that James from an early age wished to free himself and his brethren proletariat from the oppressive bourgeois regime and forge a truly Marxist nation that would not err from the righteous path as had nations such as the USSR, the DDR, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Vietnam, China, Laos, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, Myanmar, North Korea, Cuba, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – nay, Australian Marxism would be very different indeed.

At an age somewhere between seventeen and twenty-two, James

was accepted into the Australian National University and rapidly rose through the ranks of Socialist Alternative.

A sharp lad, James quickly cleared the muddy waters of university socialist movements. He won fourteen Nobel Prizes in Economics for his discovery that the only incentive a worker needs is the knowledge that his meal will be the same size no matter how much he works.

Operation: Contretemps

But the intellectual, cultural, and creative apex of Mr Higgins' career came when, in a David and Goliath-like manner, he took on the Health Minister (who was spreading vile government lies and blatant propaganda at the time).

The "Honourable" Tony Abbott was in the process of urinating on students and laughing maniacally when suddenly the clouds parted and James – armed only with a megaphone and a few other fanatics who hadn't bathed in some time – came down from on high, shouting "Shame, Abbott, Shame!" repeatedly, forcing the Minister to move several metres away.

Of course, the government spin machine went to work, and amazingly this act of courage and loud talking was soon made to seem like the deranged ac-

tivities of some far-left sectarian extremists.

It was the Vietnam War all over again.

Trampled by society obsessed with realism

As political pressure mounted from unscrupulous moderates and power hungry Labor party cronies, health concerns forced James to resign from the prestigious chair of the Education Department, a move accepted gladly by a society obsessed with pragmatic reality.

Well, I spit on that society! If we no longer live in a world where an otherwise respected and engaging public speaker cannot be shouted into submission by a very small group of radical separatists without fear of public scorn, then I'm not sure that's a society I want to be a part of.

It's determination like James' that means public speakers memorise lines to deride hecklers and the Prime Minister drives in a car with bullet-proof windows.

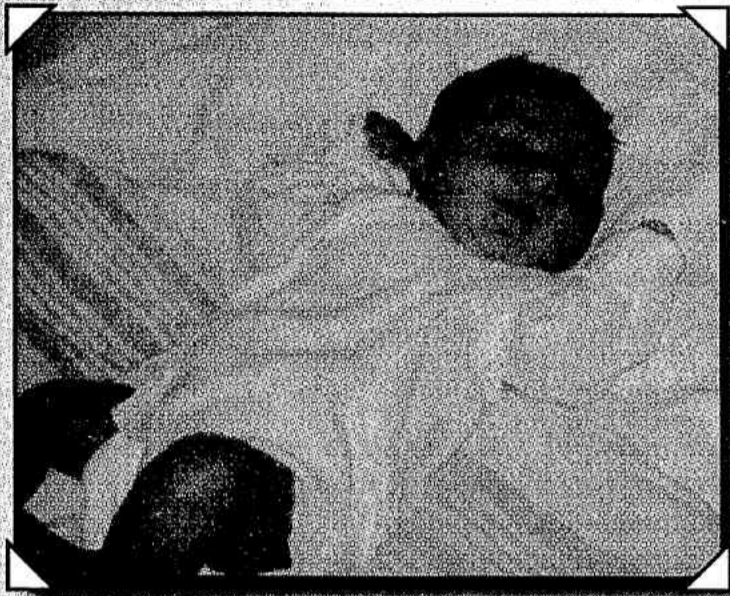
Keep fighting, James; keep on fighting. ■



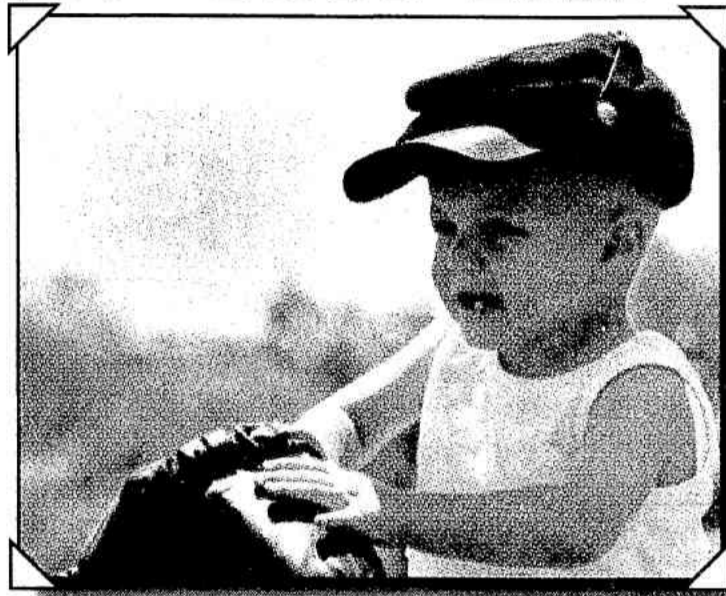
Above James gently explains to ANUSA Vice-President Bec Thornberry why bellowing "Fuck off!" is more worthy of free speech than the debate with Abbott

JAMES HIGGINS

A REVOLUTIONARY THUS FAR



James began life in the latter part of the twentieth century, probably something like this



The fascist lures of *Play School* couldn't distract James from the plight of the proletariat



When sexist, racist, anti-queer Liberal scum turns up, James stands ready to battle for students



James (far left, appropriately enough) grabs a Socialist Alternative banner and makes his feelings known



Socialist Alternative groups around Abbott, bravely shouting down every word he tried to say...



... not like those "Hate what you say but defend to the death your right to say it" traitors from Resistance

Don't give Liberals a voice on our campus!

Elinor Jean from Socialist Alternative

In O-Week, Socialist Alternative (SA) led a demonstration against Tony Abbott's speaking on campus. I'll explain and defend that.

No friend of students, women

Tony Abbott is a senior minister in the Howard Government. This government has constantly attacked students, culminating last year with the introduction of voluntary student unionism (VSU).

In the ten-year Howard term, students' and graduates' contribution to university costs has risen from 14% to 42%. HECS rates have risen from under \$3,000 to approximately \$4,000-\$8,000. The overall accumulated HECS debt of Australian students has risen from \$3.9 billion to \$13.2 billion!

But the Howard Government has not just made life harder for students. They have participated in the mass slaughter of Iraqi civilians. They ruthlessly incite anti-Muslim racism. They banned gay marriage. They lock up refugees in concentration camps for years. They refuse to sign the Kyoto Protocol. Their so-called WorkChoices reforms will seriously undermine Australian workers' wages and conditions.

Tony Abbott is not just a member of a revolting right-wing government. His crusade against women's rights, particularly the right to abortion, is well-known. In 2004, he expressed his concern about an "abortion epidemic", calling 100,000 abortions each year a "national tragedy". As Health Minister he has seriously undermined women's ability to access free,

safe, and legal abortions, attacking women's right to choose what happens to their own bodies and exposing more women to dangerous illegal abortions.

Corporate-controlled media just ain't free speech

Socialist Alternative has been accused of denying Abbott his right to free speech.

But in a society dominated by corporate-owned media and run for the benefit of big business, it makes no sense to talk about free speech.

Politics is not about debating club rules and reasoned debate, leading to the most logical outcome. Politics is about power. It is about who has the power to do what they want. And ultimately in this society, there is no equality between the power of an individual university student and the likes of Tony Abbott, John Howard, or big business.

Howard's government showed its contempt for what the mass of ordinary Australians think when they went to war in Iraq, even though a clear majority (about 60%) of the population opposed it. And the same again last year when they passed their anti-worker laws, opposed by at least two-thirds of the Australian population.

VSU to crush free speech

The Howard Government itself has no regard for freedom of speech. Voluntary student unionism seriously threatens the viability of student associations across Australia, removing our right to have our voices heard and our ability to resist future attacks. This govern-

ment made it clear that they were introducing VSU to shut down student political dissent.

The Howard Government's opposition to dissent is further demonstrated by its introduction of anti-union legislation and its new strengthened anti-sedition laws. Giving Liberals freedom of speech is simply playing by rules by which they themselves do not abide.

We don't impose on those who believe differently

This does not mean SA imposes what it thinks on anybody and everybody. We need discussion, debate, and democracy within the ranks of those fighting for our rights (e.g., within trade unions, students' associations, and campaign meetings).

But this does not apply to people who want to destroy our rights, such as Tony Abbott and the Howard Government. Giving Abbott a platform on campus only increases his power and legitimises what he says. He is not interested in "debate", nor does being asked questions by students embarrass him or deter him from his agenda.

The only way to resist the Howard Government is to organise and fight back collectively - which is why SA is constantly involved in building mass campaigns, such as the anti-VSU and anti-war ones.

We stand absolutely by our actions in protesting against Tony Abbott. Whenever right-wing, union-bashing scum like Abbott comes onto our campuses, we'll be there chanting, "Racist, sexist, anti-queer, Liberals are not welcome here!" Why don't you come and protest with us? ■

To defeat Abbott, you need to defeat his ideas

Leigh Hughes from the ANU Resistance Club
.....

On the Wednesday of O-Week, Health Minister Tony Abbott was invited to speak on campus.

A large number of students came, many of whom were clearly intending to hammer Abbott on the issues of VSU and abortion.

As Abbott made his way to the microphone, members of Socialist Alternative marched down to Union Court and started chanting anti-Liberal slogans.

It would have been a good start to the aforementioned hammering that students wanted, except that this chanting continued throughout Abbott's speech and continued during question time despite the protestations of the crowd.

That a majority of those attending ended up abusing Socialist Alternative rather than Abbott indicates the tactical error by Socialist Alternative. The result was a protest involving far fewer students than it could have, and sadly one that might tar all socialists with the idiocy of one group.

Capitalism limits free speech

Before discussing tactics, the issue of free speech should be addressed, and no doubt has already.

Free speech, in the context of Australian capitalism, is a concept that becomes very abstract when you actually consider who is able to get their opinions across. If you have a lot of money, own a newspaper or a television station, or expound a conservative view that big business supports, then your ability to speak out is much greater than someone with progressive ideas that the wealthy beneficiar-

ies of capitalism oppose.

In the abortion debate, for example, compare the coverage that people from women's health clinics have been able to receive compared to the full-page colour newspaper spreads, highway billboards and friendly shock-jock interviews that Tony Abbott alone has received.

The argument that Abbott should have been allowed to speak on campus purely because of the principle of free speech falls down when you realise not only is free speech too expensive for most of us to have any real meaning, but that no student protest, however large, has any hope of silencing the barrage of media Tony Abbott can whip up.

Just let Abbott hang himself

So the question of whether Abbott should have been allowed to speak on campus should be purely tactical for those who oppose his views.

While Tony Abbott might have medieval views on women, be a headkicker in a government that has a shocking record on students and workers rights, and is in many ways responsible for the rise of a Munich beer hall mentality amongst young Liberals, the question is not if, but how, we can oppose him.

At the ANU, where the debate on the issues Abbott is raising is just beginning, and many students are unconvinced of any position, the best way of winning the political battle is to engage in debate and prove your ideas are better than Abbott's.

If you shut down the debate and restrict it to slogans, as Socialist



Above Gollum and the Health Minister – separated at birth?

Alternative did, students are still going to be able to hear Abbott on the news that night, but they won't hear the counter-arguments that would have been raised if the on-campus debate had occurred.

Give Abbott enough rope to hang himself, and you know he will. ■

Cunning linguistic stunt

Megan Leahy, ANUSA's Women's Officer and resident feminist, has reclaimed a very naughty word. (This one's for you, Sophie Panopoulos!)

Over the past few months I've come to terms with the word "cunt".

That's right - I no longer flinch when I hear it, and have even been known to use it myself, sometimes over and over again to make the point that I don't hate it.

Blokes and their c's

I was recently in the company of a group of men I just met. Lovely guys, behaved beautifully towards me; however the conversation was littered with THE WORD.

Each time one of them said it, they went bright red and apologised profusely. (There were a lot of apologies that night.)

One of them was telling me a story about some guy he knew and referred to him as a cunt. As soon as he said it, he stopped, a look of fear flashed across his face.

I'm pretty sure he thought I was going to either spontaneously combust or start crying. However, I explained to him my newly developed relationship with the word whereby I fully approve of it being used, so long as an actual cunt is being referred to.

He looked blank, slightly confused, then reassured me, "Nah... this guy really is a cunt."

I don't think he understood.



Above Sophie Panopoulos, MP: criticised a study into the c-word

What a word!

It's amazing the power that one word can have.

Last year I went on a couple of dates with a guy who said THE WORD a lot. Not in a pro-feminist way. More a violent, colloquial way. (In fact, I think "cunt" was incorporated into his nickname by his mates.)

We were talking about it and I ventured to express my opinion that the word is preferable when used only in reference to female genitalia. At about this point the dating ceased. Poor bastard, couldn't possibly continue seeing a girl who spoke in such a crass manner and wasn't ashamed to refer to vaginas.

I think this pretty succinctly demonstrates the nature of the word "cunt" in mainstream society. It seems that it's okay for men, and sometimes women, to use it when they are insulting someone. However, when it is used by a woman especially to describe a body part everyone seems to freak out threefold.

Embrace it, live it, love it

Okay, so by no means am I suggesting that you use the word if you feel uncomfortable with it.

But maybe just give it a shot! Maybe next time someone uses it around you in a derogatory way, object, instead of shifting around in your seat.

Know that it is a powerful word and use or respond to it as such. Then (just quietly to yourself, if you want) see how it feels to use it in a nice, empowered manner.

Did you know...

Words go through phases of being more or less inappropriate.

- Streets often used to be named after the businesses or people to be found there. In Elizabethan London a road frequented by prostitutes was named Grope Cunt Lane.
- "Penis" is a formal term, but in its original Latin incarnation it meant "tail", and only as crude slang did it refer to genitalia, roughly equivalent to "cock".
- Only in recent decades has "cunt" come to be seen as cruder than "fuck".
- The children's epithet "dork" was originally US Army slang for "penis".
- "Niggardly", which means tight with money and is unrelated to "nigger", got a Washington, DC, mayoral aide sacked for being racially insensitive in 1999. (He was reinstated.)
- "Whore" comes from the Indo-European root "kā", meaning "like/desire" - the same origin as "charity" and "karma".
- If you couldn't give a "flying fuck", then you're using a term that originally meant having sex on horseback, from the perfectly named 1800s ballad "New Feats of Horsemanship".

Because, after all, it's just a word, so its meaning can change. And I think the concept of subverting "cunt" and reclaiming it as a word that empowers women instead of being misogynistic is pretty fucking cool. ■



JOSEPH KONY

Venezuela

Inconvenient truths about a socialist dystopia

You've seen the posters about campus; maybe you even read the article in the last *Woroni*.

Socialists are trying to sell Venezuela as a working socialist state. But true to form, they

keep forgetting to mention the personality cults, the brutality, the repression.

Here's the true story of Venezuela: the story the socialists don't want you to know.

Can you hear it, comrade? All around university campuses there is a fresh life among the lonely, middle-class undergraduates who would change the world.

A new messiah

Whispers of revolution are being exchanged over lattes, as socialist fuck buddies pass off ideas from *Green Left Weekly* as their own as they try to bolster their lefty cred. Over the cigarette smoke of the alternative cafe, the three youths with Che™ t-shirts conjure a mythical, egalitarian utopia of moral relativism and social equality. Its name is Venezuela, and its new messianic icon is their president, Hugo Chavez.

The Left has been searching for a new case study to inspire the angry youth of today ever since the discrediting of socialist regimes in Cuba, China, Cambodia, North Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, Mongolia, most of South East Asia, Eastern Europe, the Soviet block, etc.

Venezuela is being hailed as that long absent "communist success", the real-life example of why all those other revolutions were different, which until now has largely eluded the bearded Marxist academic.

What picture do we see in the Venezuela of today? The last issue of *Woroni* saw it described by one member of Socialist Alliance as a vibrant, democratic socialist state holding a new vision for the future.

Sadly, all this tells us is that they skimmed *GLW*, or some other intellectually bankrupt material like *The Revolution Will Not be Televised*. Take a closer look at Venezuela and you'll see a far more complex political situation that looks anything but new to the politics of ideology.

Let's start with the dishonesty and misrepresentation of the facts that is, depressingly, now standard among the Left's analysis of foreign policy.

Last issue's column is a typical example with a series of omissions and errors that make any serious analysis of the situation in Venezuela impossible.

His electoral success is limited

The article presented a fictitious account of a Venezuela unified around Chavez, claiming that "as the benefits of the revolution have come to fruition the revolutionary people of Venezuela have come to understand what the next stage must be in the struggle to reclaim their country - socialism".





The claim that "Chavez and his supporters have won all of the seven elections held in the country with an increasing majority" are misleading and largely untrue.

First, there have not been seven elections since 1998, not unless anything the people vote on is "an election". Chavez has contested the presidency three times: 1998, 2000, and 2004 (the recall election), and there have been two parliamentary elections (2000 and 2005).

The first election saw him win 56% of the vote. The last "election" (the recall process) saw Chavez run against himself, as he had to avoid being recalled from office after 2,436,830 signatures were obtained supporting a recall election under provisions of the constitution Chavez had rewritten.

40% of those who voted (3.989 million people) wanted to recall him. 30% of the electorate (4.22 million people) did not turn out.

The additional claim that "in the 2005 elections [opponents] were unable to secure even a single seat in Parliament", neglects to mention that the Opposition boycotted the elections because of complaints of electoral misconduct.

The Opposition's withdrawal saw 75% of the electorate stay at home (versus 40-50% in past parliamentary elections).

The analysis ignores the very divided nature of Venezuelan politics today. It also throws in flowery phrases about having eliminated illiteracy, defeated capitalism and how everybody now carries in their back pocket the rewritten Venezuelan Constitution (the longest in the world, containing 350 articles), claims taken verbatim from Chavez's fiery rhetoric, but totally without credible evidence.

On the one hand, it seems clear that Chavez does have popular support; the last election in particular was monitored and endorsed by international election

groups led by Jimmy Carter.

Mass protests against Chavez, who then seizes media outlets

However, it is also equally certain that a very large minority does not support Chavez, and believes he is an autocrat who will ruin the country's economy.

While it's convenient for socialists to paint this opposition as being a corrupt elite of colonial descendants thrown from power by Chavez, in reality both sides comprise an extremely varied mixture of ethnicities, races, and classes.

In April 2002 the Opposition, whose existence Socialist Alliance conveniently ignores, called for a general strike. 500,000 people marched in the streets, calling for the Chavez's resignation two days later.

Chavez took over the airwaves across all media outlets and told the protesters (but not pro-government supporters) to go home.

When violence subsequently erupted in the streets as Chavez supporters and protesters clashed, Chavez blocked media coverage of it, in contravention of Article 58 of the constitution he wrote.

When some television channels broadcast the violence on half the screen, and Chavez telecast on the other, the government jammed these channels from broadcasting, not even attempting to follow their own legal procedures for this.

Screws being tightened on Venezuelan human rights

Whether Chavez supporters were responsible for the protest turning violent has been greatly disputed by many socialists, but Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (two groups frequently quoted by the Left to support their claims) have been extremely critical of Chavez, both for his failure to investigate the violence adequately, and for other human

rights violations. Chavez has also been accused of blacklisting those involved in strikes.

The 2005 parliamentary boycott arose in part because the vote-counting machines would record people's fingerprints, and these could be used to match their records to their votes, raising fears of subtle voter intimidation.

Forget WorkChoices - here's a real way to kill solidarity

Many claim he has also since blacklisted many of those who supported the recall. He also fired 23,000 striking workers at PDVSA, the national petroleum company.

There is a striking similarity here to the 1998 MUA waterfront dispute in Australia, which many of the same Leftist advocates who laud Chavez deplored as a violation of workers' rights.

The article in *Woroni* claimed "the corrupt board of the state oil company... [was] sacked after years of lining their own pockets", but neglected to mention the lower class workers dismissed from office.

A Venezuelan court order has since ruled the firing of the PDVSA workers was illegal and ordered their reinstatement. Chavez has repeatedly stated that he will not accept this ruling, and accused the courts of bias against him.

The International Labor Organisation, representing workers all over the world, has called for sanctions against him since 2001, when he moved against the unions in Venezuela.

Increasingly hostile to democratic processes

There are also concerns about Chavez's growing hostility to democratic processes.

He now frequently takes over the media airwaves to broadcast his own personal messages; in response, the opposition has ac-



cused him of running a propagan-
da machine.

For example, each Saturday he compels the transmission of a show called "Alo, Presidente!" which he appears on, that runs for hours over all scheduled program-
ming.

He has allowed supporters to intimidate hostile channels, and recently confiscated broadcasting equipment from a critical chan-
nel, Globovision, then reduced their licenses scope to broadcast. He further cracked down on the media by criminalising broadcast libel and slander of public officials, which allows prison sentences of up to forty months.

It almost brings you back to the days when Western Maoists held China up as a model of com-
munism, even while their people were starving and being brutally oppressed during the Cultural Revolution.

Zimbabwe-style land seizures

Chavez has also begun to confis-
cate privately owned lands with-
out compensation.

This has been justified with flowery references to social jus-
tice, and that the program will be limited to "idle lands" from "absentee landlords", a ridiculous euphemism attempting to invoke the historical wrongs of eight-
eenth century Ireland to disguise remarkable similarities its pro-
posed implementation bears to Zimbabwe's disastrous policy of land confiscation.

Even more worryingly, Chavez is on good terms with Mugabe, a brutal dictator whose grip on power has led to the starvation of his people, along with count-
less human rights abuses. In fact, Mugabe accused the media and judiciary of bias too, right before he cracked down on "dissenters" - dictator-speak for anyone that is critical of his policies.

Both men started out as popu-

larly elected leaders, both have shown increasing autocracy the longer they have sat in their velvet thrones. Isn't it great when "anti-imperialist" despots find each other?

Venezuela is still capitalist

While Chavez has been strident in his criticism of capitalism and unfair global trade, the latter with some justification, in practice Venezuela still runs on a capitalist economy, far more so than coun-
tries that are increasingly embrac-
ing free trade such as China and India.

Trying to form your own trade block doesn't count as rejecting capitalism, at least not to anyone who understands what the term actually means. Despite his rhetoric of land confiscation, very little land has actually been reclaimed to date, perhaps in part because the Chavez government has learnt from the Zimbabwe disaster of mass land confiscation, leading to hyper-inflation, food shortages and loss of foreign direct invest-
ment.

It's not a socialist idyll - it's a disaster of people polarised

Venezuela is actually a case study in extreme political polarisation, human rights violations and mis-
spent resources.

What came before Chavez was undoubtedly a corrupt and ineffi-
cient regime, and has led many people to search for any alterna-
tive that could improve their lives. What we have now is an almost equally flawed government, well-
intentioned, but whose efforts will only decrease the country's wealth.

Chavez's motives appear to be genuine, though his methods are increasingly discouraging. But he now has to choose whether he will follow his rhetoric to its disastrous conclusion like Robert Mugabe, or

whether he will move to the path of constructive engagement with the global economic system like Lula de Silva in Brazil.

The latter will give the country a chance to improve living stand-
ards for all Venezuelans through fair global trade like in so many case studies, from the Asian Ti-
gers to the EU to Japan.

The former will only create yet more poverty for the people of Venezuela. ■

Some of the things Socialist Alter-
native forgot to tell you about Ven-
ezuela's glorious revolution:

- Criticising government officials is now "libel", and can get you forty months imprisonment
- 23,000 striking workers sacked
- Zimbabwe-style land "reforms"
- Jamming signals of opposing TV stations
- Broadcasters must air hours-long Chavez propaganda each week
- Country's flag now has an addi-
tional star representing the Bolí-
varian republic he's creating and a
disputed territory - part of Guy-
ana - Venezuela claims as its own
- At his daughter's behest, the horse
on the coat of arms now runs in
the opposite direction



Booker words

Clint Smoker and Justin Pritchard interview the Booker Prize-winning author DBC Pierre

With his debut novel *Vernon God Little*, DBC Pierre created a character and voice so uniquely brilliant that it won the Booker Prize, garnered him worldwide literary attention and exposed a personal story as outrageous and entertaining as the one in his novel.

After being born Peter Finlay in Australia in 1961, his family soon moved to Mexico where he lived in opulent surrounds with servants at his order.

With 1982's overnight devaluation of Mexico's currency, his family essentially lost everything and his life changed completely. He spent nine of the following years in a drug-induced haze, was shot by his neighbour, and operated cons and scams to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, before retreating in to seclusion for "repolarising and deconstructing" himself.

In *Vernon God Little*, DBC Pierre took JD Salinger's proto-teenager and updated him for the twenty-first century in the form of Vernon Gregory Little, a hapless Texan teenager wrongfully accused of a high school massacre.

Vernon's voice was teeming with vulgar aphorisms, observations, and metaphors which had never been seen in the pages of a Booker Prize-winning novel. Most importantly, the book had an honesty and wisdom that stood out in a literary scene typically populated by politely elegant novels.

The humanisation which Pierre provided those guilty of the high school massacre elevated his protagonist to cult-like hero status, and perhaps influenced fans of his writing to view his own biography

with the same romance. But Pierre is unmoving in his regret of past misdeeds, no matter how humorous or dangerously cool they appear on the surface.

"I would definitely change my life, at least the bits where anyone else was hurt. I know it's part of the counter-weight dynamic that has brought me back to balanced life, but I certainly don't have any nostalgia - you only tend be sentimental about things that turn out well."

Whilst *Vernon God Little* made Pierre renowned as a purveyor of literary vulgarisms, his new book, *Ludmila's Broken English*, is distinctly different from his debut in its temper and intensity. The book, which Pierre describes as a story about "globalisation and the West's attitude to foreignness... at least it started out being about that, but also became a note on the irrelevance of the liberal/conservative argument", is composed of two separate strands of narrative set in opposite ends of the European continent. Half in an ambiguously futuristic England overrun by rampant privatisation and the spectre of terrorism, and half in the fictional region of Ublilsk, "a compacted heap of dung and snow... neither yet a country nor still a province" somewhere in the war-torn Caucasus.

In London a pair of 33-year-old conjoined twins, Blair and Gordon Heath, have just been surgically separated and turned loose from the newly privatised institution in which they grew up.

Meanwhile in Ublilsk, the young, beautiful, and foul-mouthed Ludmila Derev plans to

escape from a life of poverty in the Caucasus and a wretched family.

Although it takes Pierre some 250 pages to get there, the reader can sense from the outset that this is a novel of convergence in which two unrelated narratives eventually collide.

The most striking thing about *Ludmila's Broken English*, for fans of *Vernon God Little*, is its stylistic urbanity. Sure, it opens with a disgusting *mise en scène* that sees the central character preparing to be sodomised by her grandfather, but this is the kind of vulgarity that would scarcely raise eyebrows among readers attuned to the writing of Will Self, Martin Amis or Zadie Smith. DBC Pierre emerges from his second novel scarcely recognisable as the writer whose prose once drew (unfavourable) comparisons to Beavis and Butt-head, something that can be attributed to his conscious attempt to write a more conventional style of narrative this time around.

"The things most people liked about Vernon were the things I found easiest to do. So the logical thing would have been to capitalise on that, and use those elements again.

"But I seriously want to write the clouds out of the sky in my lifetime, and felt I should go the other way, out of my comfort zone."

Most obviously, Pierre has made a bold decision in leaving behind the first person, his most comfortable voice and the device that gave his first book its energy, in favour of a narrative that leaves him remote from the his characters.

"This meant not doing anything



that could have used a biographical parallel for energy, and coming out of the first person. I wanted to write a book that could've been written by someone else. I figure the guarantee of eventual satisfaction to readers is that I'm taking the risks needed to become as good as I can – they can know I'm writing honestly, with a view to surprising them, and hopefully delivering a body of increasingly brighter work."

But at times throughout his new book Pierre comes across as an author who seems decidedly ill-at-ease trying to do the conventional; his descriptions are often overwrought and confused to the point of being downright embarrassing – describing Bunny turning on a kitchen light, he says: "Its glow warmed the scornful penis his face had become." What the fuck? And the rest of the novel is similarly peppered with the kind of outrageously elaborate metaphors that are the enemy of good prose.

Pierre concedes that adopting a conventional form of narrative left him more remote from his individual characters, forcing him to take a more holistic approach to writing, with a particular emphasis on dialogue.

Pierre – whose own accent sug-

gests a peculiar blend of South Australian, Irish and British homes – has always had an ear for dialogue and the psychological bargaining a character can levy with the slightest change in inflection. However, he found composing the dialogue for Ludmila's Broken English, which is half-written as a translation from Ubli (an invented Transcaucasian language) particularly challenging.

"It was bloody hard. But after you've swum for a while in that language it comes more naturally. The whole process took me about eighteen months, but by then I could accurately predict what the foreign characters would say, how they would respond."

Described by Pierre as "the language most exquisitely tailored to the expression of disdain", Ubli is rich in colourful epithets: "Don't piss grease down my throat", "I shit on the graves of your dead", "Keep your filthy lies in your arse", and interspersed with cheerfully violent threats for good measure: "I will bolt the cheeks of your arse to the backs of different trains."

At its core, however, *Ludmila's Broken English* is an intensely political novel, which sees Pierre turn his pen on a range of targets in the globalised world. To this end he is almost aggressively allusive, filling his narrative with oblique political asides that range from the contemporary (Blair and Gordon draw their names from the current British Prime Minister and his soon to be successor) to the classical (the father of Russian anarchism Peter Kropotkin, Benjamin Disraeli, and even Lenin's mother all make appearances).

The effect of all these clever sideways glances and allusions to political history is deeply unsatisfying, however, as Pierre is hesitant to ever deliver a verdict on globalisation.

"Yes, there's plenty of political insight is in the book – no conclu-

sions, though, just plenty of internal arguments."

But Pierre maintains he's dead serious about his symbolism.

"There's an entire Transcaucasian history written through the book."

He also notes, "There are three levels you can read *Ludmila's Broken English* on. I think I partly do this to add value to the book, but also if you're ever stuck with it on a desert island, you'll have more than just one story to nut out."

In finishing *Ludmila's Broken English*, the reader is left with the sense that DBC Pierre is grappling with a severe case of second-novel-syndrome, earnestly trying to live up to the sense of expectation that followed his debut.

Not content to just be a good storyteller, Pierre has decided that he must also be profound and in doing so he has overextended his talents, losing the honesty that made his first novel such a charmer.

Still, in amongst all the pretentious guff and horribly mixed metaphors, glimpses of Pierre's prodigious talent shine through on almost every page. No other author writing today explores the baroque with such funny and obscene detachment as DBC Pierre, his novel interspersed with occasional moments of shocking loss and beautiful absurdity. ■

***Ludmila's Broken English*, published by Faber, is out now.**

Author's shelf

DBC Pierre recommends:

- *Papillon*, Henri Charriere
- *Decline and Fall*, Evelyn Waugh
- *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, Charles Mackay
- *The Tin Drum*, Gunter Grass
- *Anthropology*, Dan Rhodes

Sometimes a cigar's not just a cigar

Katherine Urbanski on ciggies in the flicks

Aside from the addictive properties of smoking, it has obtained something that makes it difficult for us to quit.

Smoking has a meaningfulness that is incredibly useful. It has become a convenient way to code personality traits and attitudes. We have absorbed these messages like so much, well, second-hand smoke (excuse the pun). And personally, I blame the movies.

The most obvious example of meaning is the original. Smoking equals sex.

In early cinema, where censorship prevented showing physical intimacy, smoking became a proxy. The act of lighting a cigarette for a member of the opposite sex allowed for close physical proximity and oh-so-subtle Freudian imagery.

Later, the couple smoking in bed after the act, and the beautiful smoking woman, would become other clichés used as a cinematic shorthand for sex. The images have evolved to reflect the times, from Lauren Bacall asking Bogart, "Got a match?", to Audrey Hepburn's long cigarette holder in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, to catsuit-Sandy in *Grease* ("Tell me about it, stud"), to Carrie Bradshaw smoking in her designer underwear (okay, that's TV, so sue me).

If you search online, there are sites dedicated to images of celebrity women smoking. Dig deeper and they begin to move towards to pornographic...

The sensuality of smoking tends to be conveyed through, for the most part, women. The sexualised nature of women on screen is no secret, the female form being the number one way to indicate "sex".

Numerous aspects of feminine sensuality can be conveyed

through the act of smoking, depending on how it's done.

Calm sophistication presents through slims or holders and elegant method (channelling Audrey).

Sexual aggression can also be communicated by method – assertively lighting, smoking, and stubbing, usually accompanied by glaring (think Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*, or Parker Posey).

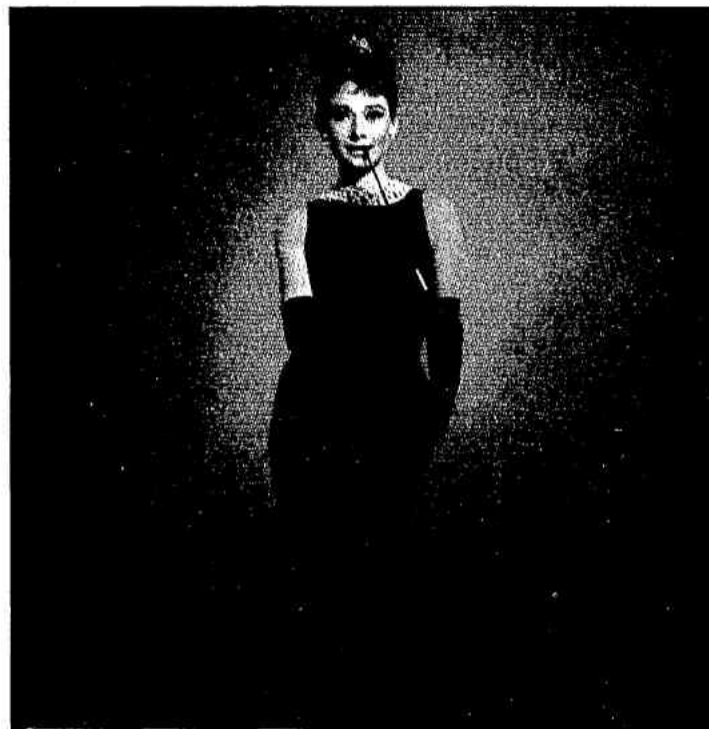
Even vulnerability can be put across (the woman on the verge of tears whose lighter won't work, or Bridget Jones desperately rifling through an oversized handbag to find a cigarette, both helpless until a male hero steps in).

Other "negative" aspects of female sexuality are, of course, also easily communicated. Most movie prostitutes smoke, as do the majority of sluts, strippers, crack-whores, and other bad girls – all the fun characters, really.

And for the boys? Smoking is an easy way to indicate toughness, ruggedness, everything a lady could ever ask for. Westerns were one an early genre that got a lot of mileage out of this connection. The Marlboro Man was simply a reminder of screen cowboy heroes who drank, fought, killed and died like real men.

Smoking, then, can be used to symbolise sex, and availability, in Western society. Look around next time you're out at Mooseheads.

And that's not all! WWII heroes, 1950s teens, hippies, bikers, the brat pack and stockbrokers, slackers and the Y generation – all have lit up to show their youthful immortality and rejection of



authority. Trying to convey that your character is easy-going / complicated / depressed? Showing that your hero character has some grit? That your character thinks they're not going to make it out of the mess they're in, so they stop and talk about what they're going to miss most (until they use some ridiculous plot contrivance to escape their predicament)? Why not have them smoke a cigarette!

Because it's all just so easy. The coding is all there. The audience can follow. A child could follow. And they do – 85% of PG-13 movies contain smoking. It allows the audience to really, you know, like, connect, with your characters. So why not have them smoke a cigarette?

Because it's all just so easy. That's why advertisers use similar images and 'storylines'. That's how movies have become a vehicle for product placement. Movies as art should seek innovation. Movies as entertainment should do the same. The audience deserves more than an uninspired short-hand for personality and emotion. ■

TRAVELLING *the* Middle East

Pip Blackwood set aside her family's concerns and made Jordan her first overseas adventure – and it turned out to be truly stunning

My announcement that my debut overseas adventure would begin in the Middle East led to a bit of umming and ahing amongst friends and family.

With all the hoo-ha about terrorism and what not, it's easy to see why. That being said, Jordan is fantastic – though if I learnt to fear anything on my trip it's the manic drivers that inhabit Jordanian roads.

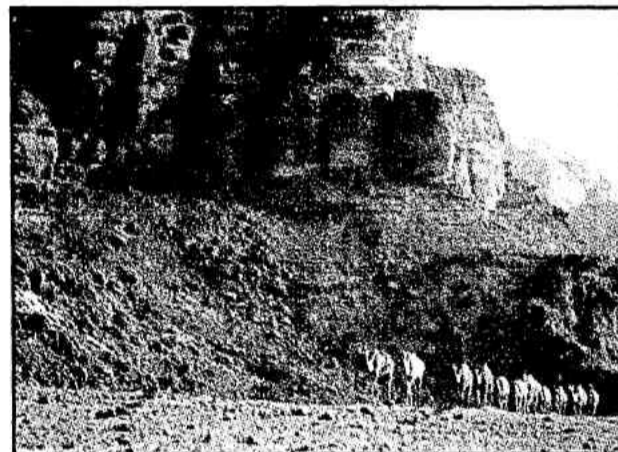
A day with the Duke

As if one dollar kebabs, shee-sha pipes and fake Dior weren't enough, we spent a few luxurious days at the oasis of "the Duke" – an enigmatic, septugenarian owner of never-ending olive groves at the top of the country.

Hot mineral water sprung



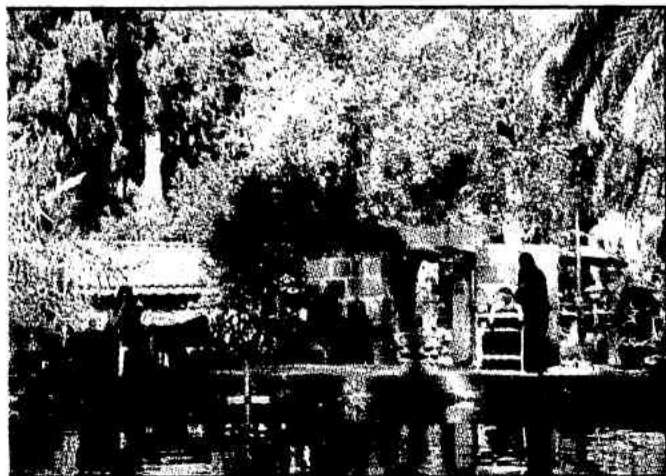
naturally from the ground, flowing into giant pools he made using the remainders of Roman ruins on the farm. Perched on a Corinthian column he casually points out the places where Israeli snipers are occasionally spotted on the Golan Heights; then in the same sentence he reprimands me for not concentrating hard enough on the yoga lesson he is simultaneously conducting.



Hanging with the Bedouin

Over the next few days, we head down to Aqaba (on the Red Sea, the one Moses parted so everyone could haul arse to the Promised Land). The local political rally looks a bit dodge – instead we hightail it to the desert in a taxi.

Here we meet Maziet: a Bedouin with whom we hope to ride camels into the sunset, enjoy a goat sacrifice, and eat with our hands. But instead of the dramatic roughing it I had envisaged, he whisks us about the sandy planes in a 4WD, and later in his tent (that could easily fit fifty people) cooks us a three-course meal that we eat at a set table. I try not to act disappointed, but seeing the shooting »



« stars as I fall asleep outside makes up for any middle-class delusions that might make me want to kill a goat.

Welcome to Hotel Wadi Musa

From Wadi Rum we go to Wadi Musa (River Moses), and a town that lies on the outskirts of Petra (Greek for Rock).

Lonely Planet had blacklisted our hostel a few years ago, primarily because of the small matter of rampant drug use, rape, and murder; for four dollars a night and a

real toilet, though, I'm willing to take the risk.

Kitsch fluorescent love hearts cover the walls, beaming cheesy messages like "You came alone, but you left with friends" and "If you see someone with a frown, give them your smile".

I hope all the potential rapists/murders who stay here can read.

The myth of Petra

Petra is amazing. Thousands of years ago, magnificent facades of classical architecture were sculpted into the sweeping sandstone cliffs. Thought of as myth to the western world until the nineteenth century, it was previously a secret guarded by Bedouin tribes.

Although swarming with tourists on day trips organised by luxury cruise ships on the Red Sea (primarily fat American women in their fifties who wander with ample bosoms overflowing from their singlet tops complaining loudly about the smell), Petra has an undeniably ethereal ambiance.

The Bedouin still live in the smaller caves, and the youngest of them (as young as three)



totter about with cardboard boxes full of rocks and demand one Dinar (A\$2) per pebble.

I tried giving the kids fruit but looks of horror and confusion were enough to break the language barrier and confirm this was not the welcome gesture I thought it would be. They force the rocks on you anyway, and with a little pat tell you that it is a gift and get extremely offended if you try to give it back.

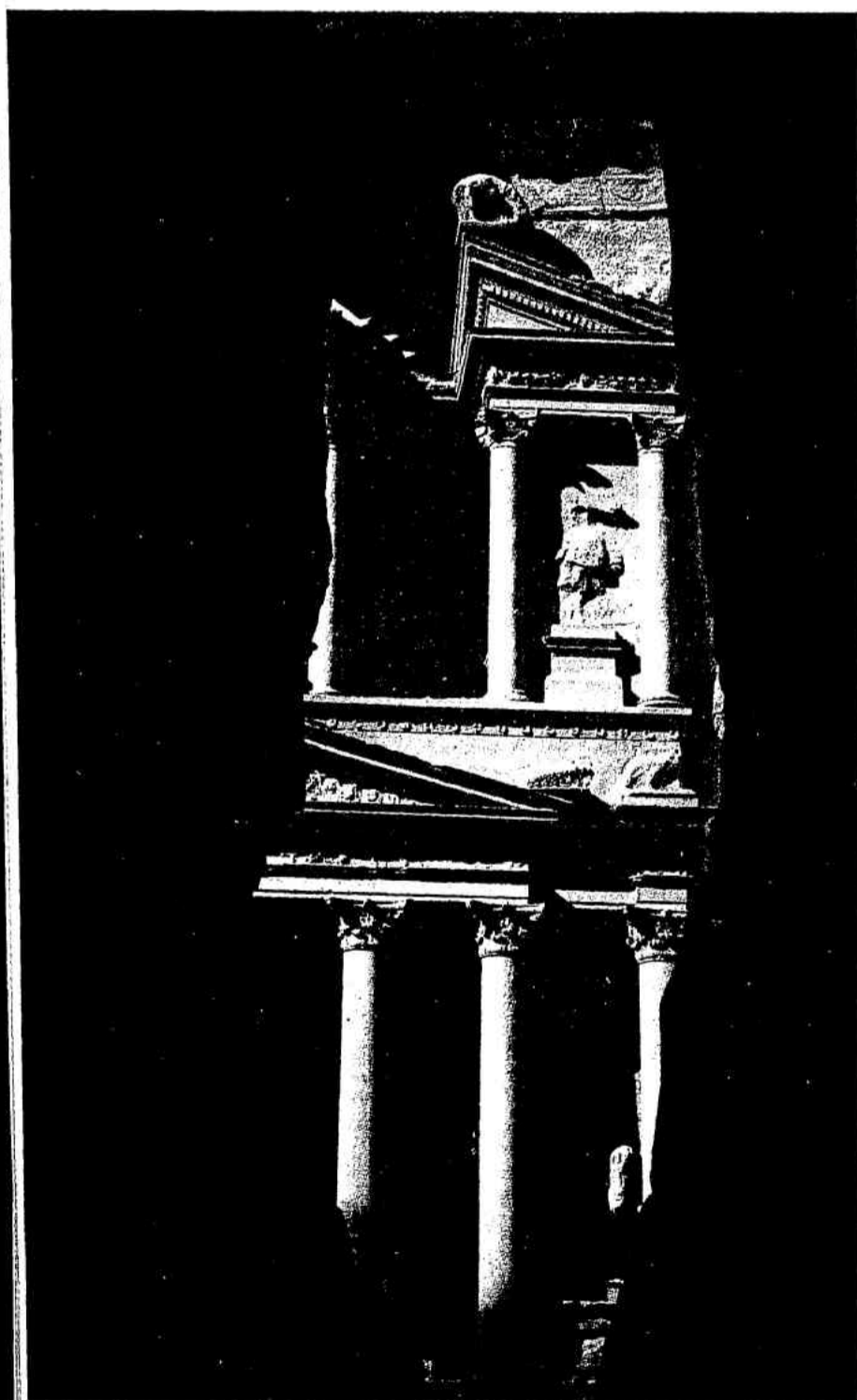
It's funny that this place is one of the engineering and artistic feats of the ancient world, and yet the attraction lies in the rather gorgeous Arab men who prance about on horseback offering private tours of where Indiana Jones was filmed.

Of course, I am totally sucked into this and later at the hostel they play the video for us and we re-live the magic once again.

Down by the Dead Sea

Global warming meant the weather has been twelve degrees hotter than normal, so we head down to the resorts that skirt the Dead Sea in hope of going for a float.

We have to pass through security before we can hit the sand (silt), and I am the last to go through. The situation should be old hat by now, but the presence of



heavies standing about with guns is not exactly comforting.

Walking through the gates the guards get excited. A woman comes forward, asks me something in Arabic, and then says in a heightened voice, nodding "Baby?"

The other women look happily at me, and trying not to look like I'm annoyed that I have been called a fatty boomsticks again*, I decide that this situation wins over a strip search, so I laugh and make my first joke in Arabic by patting my belly and saying "La! Falafel!"

I arrive at the "beach" hoping to bob about in the Dead Sea reading *Vogue*, looking like some sort of Hollywood glamour puss just like in the travel brochures. However, being the lowest point on earth (and shrinking by ten metres a year), we are forced to wade a good while through the mud before it gets deep enough to attempt to lie down.

But it works, it really holds you up! I continue to test my theory by finding a deeper spot and attempting to plunge myself downwards only to pop back up again, bursting out of the water like an excited champagne cork. Don tells me seriously, "Just be careful of the mines if you go out any further!"

The novelty of floating is only detracted by one thing, a factor which they fail to mention in any of the books - it is really, really painful.

Unfortunately the salt penetrates the parts of your body you don't want to think about, and when I sliced my hand open on a huge salt crystal formation at the bottom I understood why this is the supposed location of the mouth of hell.

Madness in Damascus

The sensation of the Dead Sea fades as we bus it to Syria, flying past arid, rocky landscape.

Damascus is an assault on the

senses. The manic traffic makes Amman's standard of roadside manners seem like fond memories of long ago. Crossing the street from the bus station involves no less than eight lanes of vicious taxis, minivans and lorries - with no pedestrian crossing to be seen. Our only defence is to hold out a hand to the oncoming machines of potential death and disfigurement and holding forefinger to thumb, wrist parallel to the ground shaking muttering "shui, shui", Arabic for "gently, gently".

Somehow we make it to the other side. I now understand why everyone is so big on believing in miracles over here.

I make a mental note not to sit in the front when getting in the taxi (as this apparently is a sure-fire sign one is a prostitute) and we zip down the labyrinthine streets and narrow passageways.

Damascus is the oldest inhabited city in the world. The buildings literally crumble. Layers of construction document this city's vibrant past; upon entering a "cooler than thou" nightclub I couldn't help but notice that five metres above where we were seated a balcony poking out into the room complete with clothesline sporting a few singlets and potted geraniums perching out through the slats.

It is undeniably exotic. Ottoman balconies overhang the street, vines crawl around doorways and cats sulk about at every turn. Metres from our quaint street the romance gives way to another gush of traffic, and I want to have the babies of whoever had the good thinking to build the pedestrian overpass to the other side.

This is the place of the Souk - an amazing bazaar where plump old men press figs on us, young girls giggle about bridal wear stores, and at every turn someone pushes a cheap table cloth/small child in one's face. Thus each step is punctuated with a sharp "La!

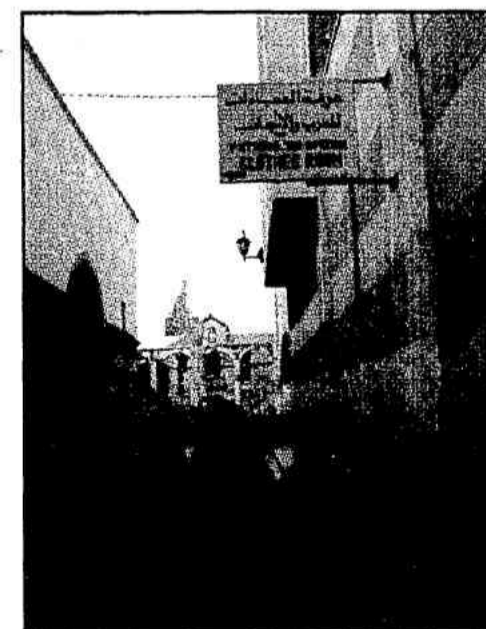
Shukran", or failing this, noises of "Tsk" are made by dragging the tongue along the palate (which I never quite mastered and so walked about sounding like a tutting school marm).

The funniest of shops stock explicit lingerie; sequined body stockings, feathered G-strings and diamante-encrusted suspenders hang merrily from the walls facing out into the main passage of the Souk. Women covered in a hijab with only eyes showing can be seen picking up examining such delicacies and coming out of the store with armfuls of packages, their kinky smiles appropriately covered up.

Those were only a few of my Middle-Eastern adventures. As crazy as it all was I can't wait to go back. Despite the nightmare stories of terrorism, it's a beautiful, exotic place, so the next time you pack your bags to nip overseas consider Jordan. You'll love it. ■

A little aside...

** People - even strangers - often congratulate me and when they ask me when I am due. I reply, "Not for another ten years at least," to which their confusion quickly transcends to mortification and they babble something about me having such a healthy glow.*



The West's eyes in the East

Woroni interviewed Robert Fisk, a colossus of journalism whose connections and insight into the Middle East are unparalleled in the Anglosphere

Where do you think the motivation for terrorism lies?

Well, I've spent my entire life in the Middle East, in the artificial borders the West created in the aftermath of the First World War and it's not by chance that in all these places people are dying.

We've created a world which is essentially artificial, we created that world for us. Drawing the borders is a way of controlling a country. The fact is that when you're in a controlled country you're going to impose laws and rules upon

them which will suppress the people in them, will not give them the opportunities which you and I as free people want.

When you put people into this hothouse atmosphere, you want to create an environment in which millions of people live, in which the demands over the injustices that is upon them - whether it be because their borders are artificial or their dictators are brutal or whatever. And you're going to create groups of people who will break out explosively against this.

Now that doesn't mean that there's justice on their side, there isn't. If you talk to Muslims in the Middle East I don't know anybody... who would believe in flying airplanes into tall buildings. But I know many of them say that what Bin Laden says politically they agree with.

So the answer to stopping terrorism is to get the Americans out of the Middle East.

How, then, do you account for the presence of terrorism in countries like Indonesia,

Huh?

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which are relatively insulated from American foreign policy?

I think it's very easy – especially if you're into this Samuel Huntington bullshit about a clash of civilisations – to do a broad sweep around the world and pick examples of terrorism occurring in areas that are outside the scope of American foreign policy. And while there are partly regional issues at play here, I also think that these incidences have connections to the Middle East.

Britain is a democracy but we have bombs on the London tubes and that was clearly brought over from Iraq. The bombers had talked about Iraq, were angry about Iraq and clearly there was a connection whatever Tony Blair may say.

So the answer lies in a compromise over foreign policy?

You see what we've got to realise is that, after the Second World War, we got used to having our wars abroad and not getting touched at home.

In Korea, no Korean ever came and blew up the Tower of London. We were fighting the North Koreans and the Chinese far, far away. We could sit in Gloucestershire or we could sit in Brisbane and nothing ever came. And the same was applied to Vietnam, no Vietnamese suicide bomber popped up in Piccadilly or New York to take revenge for the bombing of Hanoi. The same applied to Yemen, the British in Cypress, the British in Palestine, all the guerilla wars.

And in each of the wars we said we wouldn't talk to the terrorists. We said we wouldn't talk to [Kenyan insurgency group] Mau Mau, and [then their leader] Kenyatta had tea with the Queen!

We said that we wouldn't deal with the terrorists of Palestine, and [future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem] Begin met the Queen and he was the chief Israeli terrorist in 1947-48.

The Americans said they would never talk to the North Vietnam-

ese and they did in Paris. So you've got to realise there's a certain narrative set down that we are fighting world evil and we will not talk. But at the end of the day we talk to most insurgents. We're talking to the insurgents now in Iraq and we will continue to talk to them and eventually we will have to negotiate our way out.

But are you being realistic in suggesting that the terrorist leaders of the twenty-first century like Zarqawi are in a position to negotiate with Western leaders? Are they going to be responsive to changes in policy from the Western world, or are they simply going to fight for its destruction, regardless of the foreign policy of its governments?

You must remember that, unless we deal with the injustices that history has produced in the Middle Eastern region, we will not be able to protect ourselves. We cannot do it.

You could have all the emergency legislation in the world which Australia is beginning to have. You can have wiretapping, you can have stop police stopping everyone who looks like they're of Middle East appearance. You can have torture on a wide scale which you've got in Bagram, which you've got in Abu Ghraib, which we've got in Guantánamo, you can torture people to death.

But Guantánamo doesn't work. As long as we think that we can operate militarily and bring peace and security we will fail, it won't work.

But the problem is that, the moment you say that, people accuse you of wanting the terrorists to win.

Can you even bargain with terrorists? Well, with al-Qaeda no, al-Qaeda don't want to talk and they're not going to. Al-Qaeda in Iraq will have to be dealt with by the Iraqis when we've gone. The insurgents in Iraq are also blowing

up people; the Iraqis here, you can talk to them, they're just former generals in the Iraqi army, and there's many of them speak English, some of them were trained in the United States.

You've been something of an optimist – for want of a better phrase – about the problem of a civil war developing in Iraq, compared to the occupying forces who seem to think it's a very real possibility. Could you tell us why this is the case?

Well, the first person to talk about the possibility of civil war was Dan Senor, the spokesman for the occupying authorities in August 2003.

I was sitting in the press conference and he started talking about the dangers of civil war. I said, "What? Who's talking about a civil war in Iraq?"

In fact, I recently went to the funeral of a dentist, a Sunni Muslim who was shot in his surgery because he objected the building of a Shiite Muslim mosque at the end of his street. And after the funeral I sat on the floor of the family home to eat, I sat next to his brother who of course was a Sunni and I posed the same question that you just asked. And the guy said, "You know we're not a sectarian society; we're a tribal society. We're intermarried, why do you Westerners always want a civil war?"

He said, "I'm married to a Shiite, do you want me to kill my wife?"

And you know this is not anecdotal, this is the real thing, this is an authentic Iraqi voice of a man whose brother had just been murdered.

Now you know somebody wants a civil war in Iraq, somebody wants a civil war all right, clearly and the death squads are contributing to it when you have you know fifteen Sunnis found with their heads blown off in a river. Or you know sixteen Shiites

»

« murdered in a suburb of Baghdad clearly somebody is trying to ferment civil war. But I don't believe it's a simple case of Sunnis and Shiites or Zarqawi. This is a narrative laid down by the US generals and politicians.

Who do you think is behind the push for civil war in Iraq?

I don't know the answer.

Every time I go into Baghdad I try to find out who's behind these suicide bombings, I don't know.

By my calculation we've had about 382 people commit suicide bombings.

Where do they come from? We don't know. But it's the way in which the story is told by the media, with its "good versus evil" narrative that worries me.

I'll give you an example. Over and over again, kidnap victims in Iraq are seized by people "wearing police uniforms", which happened in Algeria too. Or we hear that a police station was overrun by men wearing army uniforms.

Now don't tell me there's a warehouse in Fallujah with eight thousand police uniforms hanging on coat hangers waiting to be used, there aren't, because they're real police and they're real soldiers - and they are being paid by the Americans.

I remember in the Algerian war at the beginning, which is very similar, people having their heads chopped off, foreigners being murdered, and we found the government was deeply involved in the massacre as well as the insurgents.

You've predicted with some certainty that American troops are going to leave Iraq in the near future. How do you see that happening?

There will have to be talks with the Iraqi insurgents. They will have to talk to the generals who are in charge of the insurgents. It may already be happening for all I know.

You know, you've got to realise

that the people who are actually commanding the forty thousand men attacking the Americans and the British... were soldiers in the Iran-Iraq War they fought and died for eight years. And at that time they couldn't have any initiative because the only initiative was in the hands of a guy with a moustache who lived in Baghdad.

But now they do have initiative, that's why the insurgency develops into new tactics and new ways of attacking the Americans with new weapons. The Americans are fighting the Iraqi army in effect, that's what's actually happening.

Now we can mix them all in and call them "terrorists", but the fact is they are the Iraqi army and in due course they will meet the generals I met. The Americans will have to find a way out which will not humiliate them and they have to find a way out in which they don't leave under fire.

In your book you borrow a phrase from the Israeli journalist Amira Hass that good journalism is about monitoring centres of power. Could you give me an idea of how the climate in Iraq, in light of ongoing abduction of journalists, is hindering the role of the media?

Look, it's the most difficult assignment I've ever had in the Middle East and I'm increasingly questioning whether it's worth it. I've never done that before on an assignment. Is the story worth the risk or is the risk worth the story? You can choose what you want.

Are you in danger of becoming a hotel journalist?

No, I wouldn't go back to Iraq if I was going to be a hotel journalist. I still move around in Baghdad, I still go out to lunch in Baghdad. I still interview people but I keep it to a maximum of twenty minutes because I think twenty minutes is enough time it takes for a man with a mobile to get a carload of guns to where they see you.

And I'm always at the risk of being seen, taken away and reappearing on a videotape. Asking Mr Blair to withdraw British troops from southern Iraq, which I don't think he will...

...not for you at least.

[Laughs] No, exactly.

How prohibitive is this level of risk for journalists trying to provide objective criticisms of US policy in Iraq?

I don't think most foreign correspondents are in a position to criticise.

I can a little bit 'cos I can still move around and I do move around. I mean, remember one of the problems with journalists is that many newspapers employ security companies and hired mercenaries who give advice and they say you can't go out. So then they can't because if they do then they won't have any insurance for the paper, it's all a legal thing as well.

But we don't have that, we can go where we want and we do. And there are certain areas of Baghdad that I don't go to unless I've got a very good bloody reason.

And it is prohibitive if you don't go around you can't know what's going on. The government of Iraq and the military authorities sit in the green zone, they have no idea what is going on in the rest of Iraq, let alone the rest of Baghdad, most of Baghdad is in insurgent hands or semi-insurgent hands or insurgent hands at night.

But what can I do if I go in the streets? I can get little tiny fragments. I go to the university and talk to the teachers but only for ten or fifteen minutes and then I'm out, because there's no security. So I get a little fragment of their life of horror and fear. And it's worth writing; it helps to put together bits of the jigsaw. But you're not going to get most of the jigsaw. You're going to get, you know if you have a three hundred piece jigsaw set maybe I'll get ten pieces and maybe one or two of

them will fit together, I don't know they might be from different parts of the jigsaw. That's the problem of recording in Iraq at the moment.

So is it worth the risk?

Well, that's the question I'm asking every time I'm about to go. I don't know the answer. If you get caught it's not, if you can get out after three weeks and go back to Beirut it was worth it, wasn't it?

But you see you only work out the risk according to the minute of the day.

What do you see as the future for democracy in the Middle East?

The only way to deal with this question is to look at the Middle East and say look what can we do to ease this burden of suffering, what can we do to try and get some justice?

Look at the Palestinian situation. What is happening in the West Bank is that more and more land that belongs legally to Palestinian Arabs is being taken by Israelis for settlement. Settlement expansion continues which is land which will be given to Jews and Jews only - many from Russia and far away - and they come and live there on someone else's land.

And the Americans accept that, they will not force the Israelis to stop. Therefore America is complicit in the theft of this land.

Now, by saying this it doesn't mean you're on the side of suicide bombers. Now, suicide bombers are wicked, they're executioners, they see the children they are going to murder, of course. But as long as this happens and America is complicit with this theft of land in the Muslim world, how can you expect there to be peace? How would you expect to end resentment between the West

and the East? It can't be stopped and this is the problem.

A lot of Middle-Eastern people say they want justice before you start talking about democracy, but we don't talk about justice.

I went back through all the speeches I could find and Blair and Bush and I didn't find one reference to justice. We don't want to talk about justice, we want to talk

about democracy.

Unless we have a mature relationship with this region of the world and unless we can talk to them in a way in which we are all equals and we talk about what we have in common, unless we can stop militarising this area with our fat traps and our phoney dictators and our own soldiers, we will never have peace. ■

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When a resident's not a tenant

Anne Macduff of the Tenants Union ACT explains new legal issues about living on campus

Now that the university year has begun, many students living on campus are well settled into their colleges. If you are a rezzie, you might be honestly wondering how you are going to share your space with so many other people and get any work done!

But seriously, what if you don't get along with the people on your floor? What if your late night behaviour ends up breaking the rules and you think you might get kicked out?

If the worst happens, what are your housing rights and what can you legally ask for?

You probably didn't actually enter into a lease

The answer to these questions will depend on what kind of contract you signed.

You might be surprised to discover that they probably did not sign a lease. It is more likely that you signed what's called an "occupancy agreement".

But what is an occupancy agreement? How is it different from a lease and being a tenant?

Since occupancy agreements were only introduced in March

last year, even those who lived in college last year may not know. This article will try to demystify the legal jargon and explain what these changes mean for living on campus.

Different types of contracts

Let's start with explaining what a lease is.

Leases. The *Residential Tenancy Act* (ACT) governs the relationship between the person who manages the property (the landlord) and the person who wants to rent it (the tenant) through a contract called a lease.

In the ACT, leases are regulated. That is, there are standard residential terms that must be included in every lease. These terms operate to protect both the tenant and the landlord by spelling out clearly who has to do what, and when – for example, how often and how much the landlord can increase the rent, when and how often the landlord can conduct inspections, what repairs the tenant can ask the landlord to pay for, and so on.

In this way, these standard residential terms have helped resolve, and even prevent, many disputes about housing. That is, of course, so long as you have a lease!

Occupancy agreements. Students living on campus do not generally sign leases.

Students, along with boarders and lodgers and people in caravan and mobile home parks, are not tenants under the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

What this exclusion

has meant is that there was no one other than the residential college that you could appeal to if there was a problem with your accommodation contract.

Some of these problems could be very serious. They have included immediate eviction, steep sudden increases in costs and the imposition of random fees.

And let's face it – who wants to be worrying about whether or not they will be kicked out of their "home sweet home" when they are in the middle of exams!

New protection for residents

But now the situation is different. Through amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act*, students living on the campus of an educational institution this year can now be legally protected as "occupants".

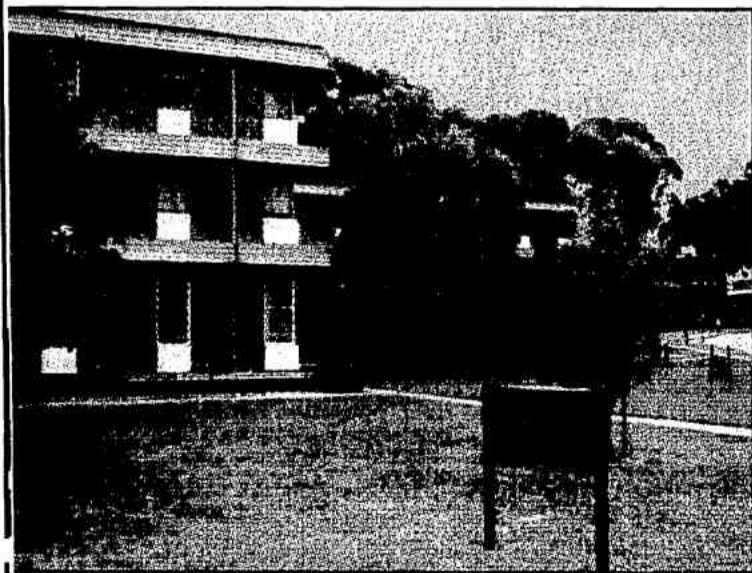
Of course, if you have the skills of Kofi Annan and are able to negotiate a lease, you can still get its benefits... although, if you had those skills, you probably wouldn't be at university studying!

But if you can't or don't negotiate a lease, then at the very least you can be legally recognised as having an "occupancy agreement". While, this is not the same as having a lease, it is something.

What does the introduction of occupancy agreements mean for students living on campus?

There are three main benefits for both occupants and grantors that flow from the recognition of occupancy agreements.

- Both the occupant (student) and grantor (residential college) can now have any dispute heard by the Residential Tenancies Tribunal. Using the Tribunal is faster and less expensive for



both you and the college if you have a dispute than the alternative – which is to go to the Small Claims Court.

- If you are required to pay bond, it can now be lodged with the Office of Rental Bonds. This allows a neutral third party with considerable experience to resolve disputes over the return of bonds.
- A degree of certainty has been introduced into occupancy agreements by requiring that the terms of the occupancy agreement to be consistent with nine Occupancy Principles.

These principles ensure many things, including: the occupancy agreement is in writing if it is longer than six weeks, the occupant must get eight weeks notice before the rent or tariff can be increased, and an occupant must not be evicted without reasonable notice.

But it's still not a lease

However, it's important to understand that occupancy agreements are not leases. What is required under the occupancy principles is less than under the standard residential tenancy terms mentioned earlier.

For example, occupancy agreements can still charge fees such as a "laundry fee", "internet services fee" or a "holding fee". This cannot be done in a lease.

Another difference is that an occupant is only entitled to know the grounds upon which they can be evicted and that notice of eviction is reasonable.

This effectively means that an eviction could happen within two days notice for no reason other than that is what the residential college wants. For a tenant, there are strict rules that regulate how a person can be evicted, and the whole process must be conducted through the Residential Tenancy Tribunal.

There are also other differences which are worth looking into.

Read the fine print!

So read the fine print on your contract. It will tell you whether you have an occupancy agreement and what your legal rights are. It might even tell you what the consequences are of putting blue tac on the walls and getting drunk in your room.

If you have any specific questions about your occupancy agreement, you can contact the Tenant's Advice Service on 6247 2011 for free legal advice. ■

The Tenant's Union ACT provides free information and advocacy on housing and accommodation issues.

The Tenant's Union ACT is undertaking a research project to find out more about how occupancy agreements are being implemented in practice. The project worker is currently interviewing people about how occupancy agreements are affecting them.

The consultation phase of the project will run for another two months. If you are interested in this project and/or have a view to share, please contact us on 6247 1026, or visit <www.tenantsact.org.au> and send us an email.

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From Russia with Love

Svi Rosov knows cool when he sees it



A few weeks ago I was on a Singapore Airlines flight that made a textbook landing to rapturous applause from economy class.

I was amazed because the only time I had ever witnessed this before was on an Aeroflot flight and, as I told my friend sitting next to me, "they only clap on Aeroflot because they're amazed the thing landed at all!"

Of course, that is unfair and in truth the technical people at Aeroflot are extremely competent; it is only the service personnel that let the team down.

Even that is understandable since they all come from the Soviet Union, a country which did not really acknowledge the existence of a service economy. In the USSR, unless something was a gun, or could have a gun attached to it (such as a tank, plane, or Viet Cong soldier), it wasn't really considered a consumption good.

I was thinking about this the other day when a few mates and I were hunting Charlie in the forests of Vietnam at a LAN café.

Earlier that night, having gorged ourselves on pancakes, we

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The National Folk Festival is at Exhibition Park in Canberra, 13–17 April 2006.



decided to go gaming rather than binge drink and try to pick up in Civic.

At the time I remember feeling uneasy about the direction in which our friendship group was heading. My fears were realised when one of our mates – who was on a date – shook his head in despair at having heard our plans for the night.

Choosing to play computer games on a Saturday night raises certain questions about one's social status and made me wonder whether or not we had stopped being cool.

However, I own a pair of Dunlop Volleys and another friend of mine has Aviator sunglasses and

continuously says things like "Hey, Goose, you need to be Maverick's wingman tonight", so we are *definitely* still cool.

To the haters out there, I draw your attention to Wolfmother. This band has shown that the only things you need to be cool and "totally puff" in this day and age are vintage clothes and an ability to play Led Zeppelin. Well, maybe not Zeppelin, but I can play ABBA on the keyboard..

In fact, I think my friends and I have hit upon the future direction of cool.

At the LAN café there was an attractive girl watching her boyfriend get excited playing Counter Strike, and recently on Market

Day even the War Games Society was attracting females. Surely it is only a matter of time before the hot girls we all wanted back in high school stop smoking at the bus interchange after class and instead head over to their nearest LAN café to eat Doritos and check out the über-micro on display?

Last year, a mate of mine was tutoring a kid in high school. One day the guy stopped showing up and a few weeks later the boy's mother rang my friend and asked him if he knew where her son was. Apparently, her son was addicted to World of Warcraft and hadn't come home for three weeks.

Mark my words, that boy is getting laid. ■

Shoes as status

Keira Paterson

Shoes, especially women's shoes, denote our status, both within the intragender hierarchy, and comparatively between genders. Basically, the type of shoes you wear most regularly tells a lot about your lifestyle.

For example, wearing heels daily, whatever quality or comfort level, shows that your job probably doesn't involve too much manual labour – or your boss is an asshole, either way. Extreme high-heel wearing says you probably don't need to walk far, or you *really* like your shoes... as in, more than you like your back.

Doc Martins, Converse, and similar boots are a bit trickier, as they send mixed messages: (1) Your job doesn't have strict or corporate dress codes, so probably doesn't create a very high income, but also (2) you can afford to buy good quality, albeit overpriced, "in" brand shoes. Likely you either have a good job with heaps of leisure time, or you are a student

– or similar – and think you are lot worse off than you actually are. Or you buy them at the expense of other non-essentials like heating.

Plain, cheap, linen sandshoes show that you are most likely one of the unfortunate people whose job requires comfortable, flat shoes, but whose income does not provide for them. And you don't get a tax deduction for them as the government believes that, unlike a bricky who might drop heavy things on his/her toes at work, thereby making steelcaps an occupational necessity, you might very well decide to stand up for forty-five hours per week even if your job did not require it, and therefore don't need the same OH&S considerations... bitter, anyone?

Further, women's shoes are very telling of the status difference between the genders. What is interesting here is that the higher up the class ladder you go in terms of shoes (oh, this is a thought piece, I know ☺) the bigger the gender/status discrepancy is.

At the bottom, in the scuffed,

dirty, falling-apart runners department, there is little if any gendered difference.

At the top it is a different story. We come here to the lady of leisure. Colourful, strappy, dainty, fragile difficult-to-walk-in shoes that cost a month's rent, worn by the woman who needs not work, has a huge expendable income, and does not need to walk far. They come up against oh-so-comfortable, high quality, shiny, non-descript leather loafers. The woman at the top is crippled, at least in comparison, by the very thing we are using here to define her status.

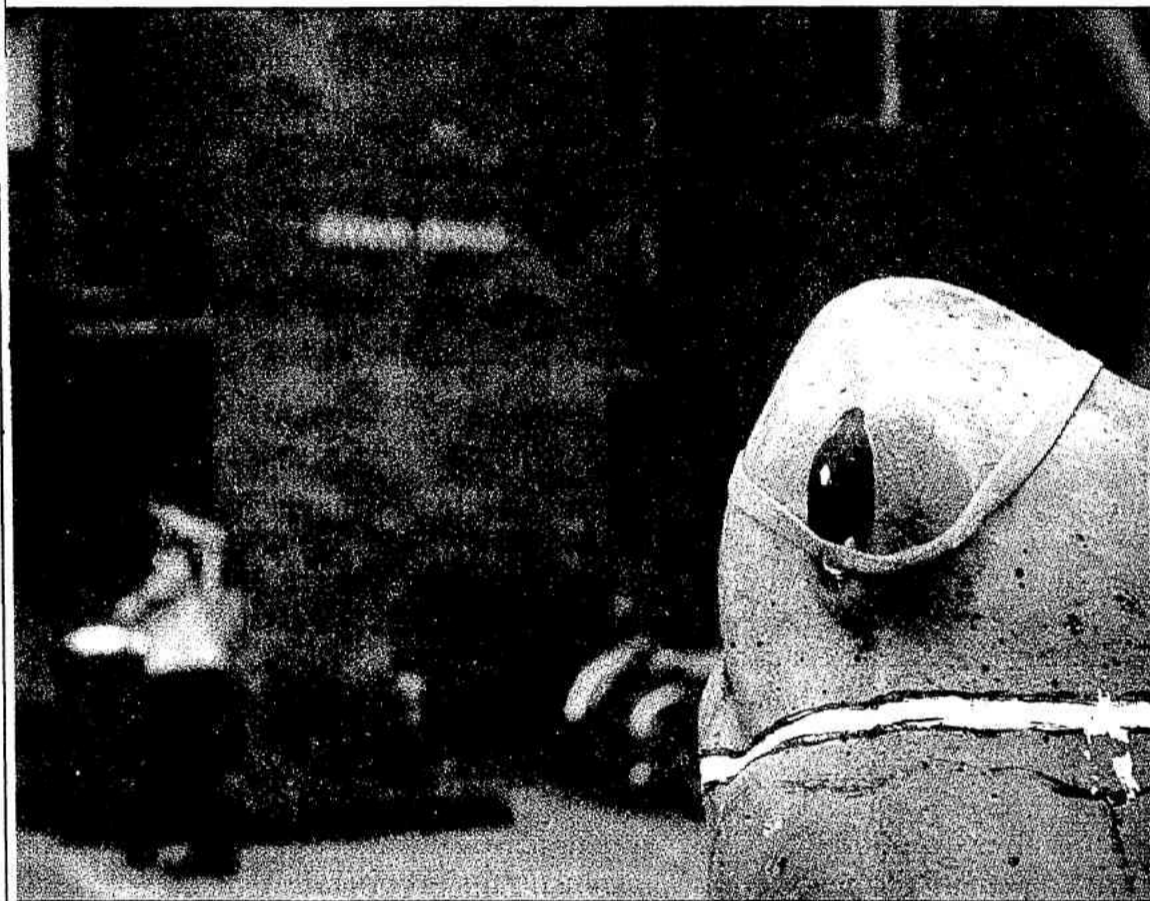
She has been duped into spending her real-life status, and her cash, her time and her energy, on being "pretty". She spends all this on being pretty, while he spends his on becoming even more wealthy and "important".

They might look equal on paper, having the same income, the same enviable address, the same "position", but her shoes, and her manicured feet, tell a different story.

Her shoes let everyone know that she is beneath him. She can hardly catch up. ■

Uni Accommodation Services needs to listen to students

The UAS still isn't consulting resident students about its decisions – and the results are in no one's best interests, finds **Ross Harvey**



The University Accommodation Service, or UAS, is by all means an essential part in ensuring the ANU's long-term success.

With the university seeking to attract ever-increasing numbers of international and interstate students, it follows that an efficient and well managed network of residential halls and colleges is essential to achieving this goal. However, for all the improvements, many critical mistakes still occur.

Some of UAS's recent bumbles

In 2004 the UAS promised accommodation to all incoming undergraduate students from outside the ACT region.

It seemed a great idea, except that, shortly after the plan was announced, a slight problem arose: there weren't actually enough rooms available.

After briefly flirting with the idea of evicting existing residents to make sufficient space, the UAS eventually backed down and arranged for accommodation to be provided at the Australian International Hotel School over in Manuka.

2005 saw new dramas. Under a cost-cutting plan launched by the UAS, each head of hall would be responsible for two colleges instead of one. The plan was trialed on Burton and Garran Hall, and Fenner Hall, and the result was

a significant failure. The savings achieved were only marginal, and with one person trying to perform two separate jobs, administrative effectiveness fell.

The year's problems weren't over. Under a UAS plan to cover various capital expenditures, residents returning for 2006 were to be hit with an upfront levy to cover the costs. Combined with expenses like textbooks and the GSF, some residents could have ended up having to pay nearly \$1,000 in charges within the space of a month. This decision was soon reversed, and a more realistic option was put in place.

These issues are just the major ones.

Each problem could easily have been avoided through adequate resident consultation.

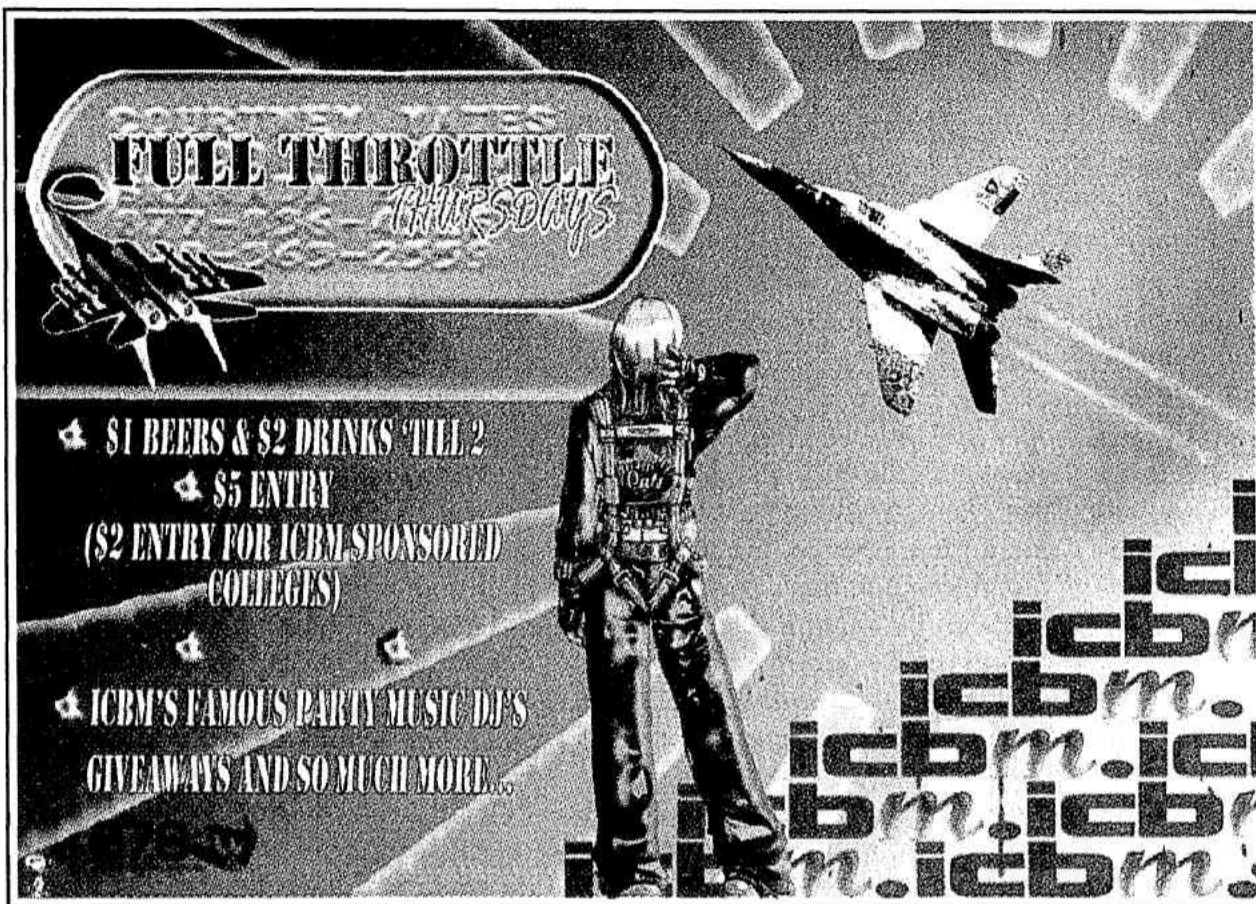
Instead, the university acted without resident input, and the consequences were severe, or embarrassing.

No lessons learnt

However, such mistakes continue to be made, the most recent of which concerns the redevelopment of Burton and Garran Hall.

Under the plan, which was devised and put into action in the summer break (when most residents were away), the entire central block common area is being reconfigured. By implementing the changes over the summer period no consultation with residents was possible. There was no opportunity for residents to voice their thoughts or concerns about





the changes.

Per the plan, doorways were removed to divide actively used areas of central block into separate halves – one being the kitchen, the other the bar area (comprising the bar, TV room, and pool room). The bar area has received various upgrades, and the roles of some other rooms have been changed around.

The impetus behind the plan is valid enough. Some very real problems, such as a \$52,000 cleaning bill for the TV room accumulated last year (created by people eating food there), needed to be resolved. Sealing the room off from the kitchen is a practical enough response, and I have no doubt that this and the other changes have been made with the best intentions.

Reaping what they (don't) sow

The main issue here though is that for all the problems these changes resolve, many others are created.

The main two objectives – to enhance the bar area, while restricting access to it from the kitchen (the main hub of activity) – are truly paradoxical. With access to the bar area substantially reduced, usage of the area has already declined dramatically.

The very key to the bar area's popularity was the ease of access. When the doors were still in place residents could conveniently move in and out of the various sections of the block as they so wished, creating a vast expanse of recreational spaces, each as easily accessible from one part of the block as the others.

With central block now so heavily modularised, and with traveling from one compartmentalised section to another now such a hassle, central block is not so well utilised as it formerly was.

The sad reality here is that if residents had been consulted, these mistakes could have been averted. The plan was all based

on the assumption that people will see the improvements to the bar area and make a conscious and deliberate decision to go there.

This overlooks one key aspect – the residents of B&G don't actually think very much, or at least not about recreation. In the majority of cases residents don't go searching for any one activity – the objective is only recreation in general. As such, people will only travel so far as is convenient. And with the bar area now harder to access, it follows that

usage of the area will fall significantly.

Management too top-down

The head of the college – who formulated the plans – is not a resident. As such he would not have been aware residents behaved in this manner.

Indeed, for an outsider the assumption that usage of the rooms would increase after a capital improvement, irrespective of decreased accessibility, would have seemed a wholly logical one.

The tragedy here is that residents could have very easily informed him otherwise. Had the head consulted openly with residents, this fatal flaw could have been averted; a better alternative could have been found.

But with the renovation nearly complete this is likely moot. We can only hope that in the future, the UAS will make the effort to stop such errors recurring. ■

Jose Gonzalez and a short history of the cover

Justin Pritchard

A cover is an attempt to do something different with a song, and its ultimate goal should be to improve on an original version which in performance didn't fulfil in its promise in song writing.

"Tainted Love" has been taken from its humble soul beginnings to a synth-pop classic for British duo Soft Cell and was also memorably covered by the Living End in custom rockabilly fashion, improving certain aspects of the song every time. Stevie Ray Vaughan's seven-minute blues instrumental of Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing" dared to place doubt in the mind of pundits as to which was a better version. Jeff Buckley used massive vocal range, passed down to him by his experimental singer/songwriter father, to improve on Leonard Cohen's baritone vocals on the beautifully written "Hallelujah".

But sometimes, artists choose to cover songs which are virtually impossible to improve. This is not because the songs cannot be rearranged, but because they hold such a place in music history and popular culture that the song defines a generation.

Ryan Adams undertook the Herculean task of covering Oasis' "Wonderwall" on his 2004 Album *Love is Hell*, and showed that his reworking of the song's tempo and vocal melody were not enough to rewrite a cavernous history of Brit-Pop.

"Love Will Tear Us Apart"

On his *Australian Tour* EP, Swedish singer/songwriter Jose Gonzalez chose the task of covering Joy Division's seminal goth-punk love ballad "Love Will Tear Us Apart".

Many before have tried to cover it. The Cure slowed the tempo



down and gave the bass a more melodic part than the synth melody line of Joy Division's original. Nick Cave changed nothing, his baritone voice nearly indistinguishable from Curtis'. Emo band Fallout Boy chose to combine very disparate elements of

acoustic guitars with punk drum rolls which seem eternal, replacing Joy Division's minimalist drumming.

Jose Gonzalez has taken the greatest risk with his cover version. He has used no extra instrumentation; it is just his guitar and his voice. But the audience need not worry – fine production techniques such as reverb on Gonzalez's vocals as well as his amazing strumming technique emphasise the percussion more than any hired session drummer ever could. His chords are so multi-faceted in character that no accompanying instrument playing the famous melody line is needed. This is the greatest cover of the song which defined the end of the 1970s.

Evolution makes perfection

Why is the issue of the cover so important, and what does it have to do with Jose Gonzalez?

Firstly, a song like "Wonderwall" or "Love Will Tear Us Apart" cannot be fully appreciated unless it is seen that it will never be improved.

Each time something different is done to it, like Ryan Adams, Jose Gonzalez, and the countless others who have chosen to cover epoch-defining songs, the listener can hear what he has never heard before on the original.

Jose Gonzalez has been bombarded with public criticism that he is building a public image too heavily around covers. He also covers Kylie Minogue's 1989 hit "Hand on Your Heart" on the *Aus-*

tralian Tour EP, and Swedish duo The Knife's "Heartbeats" on his debut album *Veneer*.

He takes the songs out of pop and electronica contexts, and puts their melodic hooks in to contemplative and slowly paced acoustic folk songs.

The talentless need not apply

Covers are not for artists who cannot write their own songs; renditions are.

A cover is an attempt to do something different with a song; a rendition is mimicry. Those bands you see in King O'Malley's on Saturday nights aren't covers bands, they do renditions.

Jose Gonzalez performs covers, and the songs are so differently arranged from the originals that, like critics describing Jimi Hendrix's vastly different cover of Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower", sound like he wrote them himself.

The *Australian Tour* EP will get its audience from the covers; it is there where the most apparent melodic hooks lie. But this is a legitimate tactic to attract more buyers to listen to the whole EP, which is full of subtle, slow-moving, but beautiful guitar progressions on Gonzalez's originals.

The instrumentals "Suggestions" and "Instrumental" are particularly spacious and the guitar chords are slow and inconstantly changed. The horn line of "Instrumental" gives the song an ethereal tone, and is reminiscent of fellow Nordics Sigur Ros.

Jose Gonzalez has got us thinking differently about some cult, epoch-defining songs, and other pop and mainstream songs. He has also thought differently about how to market his own compositions, and for his originality, you owe him the label of an artist, and not a mimic.

Keep an open mind and an open ear out. ■



Quizzing a Hood

Hilltop Hoods' Pressure chatted with *Woroni* in the lead-up to their performance at the ANU.

W: Why did you choose "Clown Prince" as your first single?

HH: We pretty much wanted something a little light hearted for the first single. It's mostly tongue-in-cheek kinda stuff, and a good pub anthem that I think a lot of my fellow drinkers can relate to.

W: I heard you used a sample from a porn flick. Is that true?

HH: You would have to ask DJ Debris that as he made the beat, which means he also found the sample. I'm sure he was innocently "digging in the crates" when he stumbled across the break...

W: Let's settle this - whose round is it really?

HH: It's hard to say, really. Usually by the end of a long night things are a bit foggy, so let's not argue the finer points of who

bought who what drink and when. All I know is after an all-nighter the beer monkey beats my wallet up pretty bad so I won't be buying anyone a round.

W: When I'm not making music I'm...

HH: Nursing a hangover.

W: What do the Hoods have planned for 2006?

HH: The release of our new LP *The Hard Road* and much more, but you'll have to wait and find out.

The Hilltop Hoods (with Funkoars, Koolism, and others) will be appearing on Friday, 7 April at the ANU Bar. Tickets available through all Ticketek outlets.

See the next *Woroni* for a full interview and feature.

Tropfest's credibility at stake

Dante Spencer is bored with judges giving awards to unexceptional one-gag films

In the fourteen years it has existed, Tropfest has grown out of a small Darlinghurst café able to seat fifty people to national outdoor venues which recently hosted over 130,000 across the country.

Tropfest creator and convenor Jon Polson has always been proud of this history, and it is clear that the short film festival has captured the imagination of the nation. It is easy to watch (the films are no more than seven minutes long) and easy to enter (production values have never been a discriminator with the judges).

When Tropfest was born and in the following ten years, it seemed that all you needed was to have an original script, whether comedic or dramatic. It also seemed – and Polson has constantly pedalled this line – that the festival is a guarantee to further industry work.

This year the crowd of four thousand packed Canberra's outdoor theatre, Stage 88 in Commonwealth Park, expecting conditions commensurate with the growth and hype of the festival.

Maybe the Bernard Fanning concert at Royal Theatre was expected to detract from the crowd size this year, but it left the back portion of the crowd with difficulty in viewing the miniscule big-screen through the trees and reading the subtitles of the first film, *Applause*. Being amongst this back portion, I could not make any assessment on the film whatsoever.

The crowd remained subdued until the third film, the appropriately titled *Tough Crowd*. This si-

lent film delivered a climatic tale of the revenge of a mime on an unappreciative audience, and was one of the only satisfying films of the night.

For years one-gag films have been a staple of Tropfest. *Carmichael & Shane* drew some uproarious laughter in the funny tale of a father of twins who avoids any difficult decision by choosing a favourite son. Over the years of Tropfest, this rates as a mediocre one-gag film, with nothing to make it memorable beyond the transient laughs.

The film *Silencer* was another example of a one-gag type of film, but was extremely clever in its own self-referential style. It tells the story of two men in a tense stand off, with secretly located guns ready to be drawn, and even more loaded personal secrets about each other, but whose every thought is shown in a thought bubble above

their head which the other character can see.

This was by far the cleverest use of the Tropfest signature item – this year a bubble – which is used to show that the film has been made specifically to premiere for Tropfest.

Gregor Jordan's 1995 Tropfest-winning film *Swinger* was a one-gag film of the grandest proportions, but was mordantly clever in its exploration of the thin line between life and death. He subsequently proved himself by cultivating the opportunities of his Tropfest victory by writing the script for as well as directing *Two Hands*.

Paul Fenech went on to write and direct the long running SBS series *Pizza* after reaching the Tropfest final several times with films about a pizza delivery boy, before winning it with a comedy written by Australian comedian

attend



Austen Tayshus

Craig Anderson and Bryan Moses went on to create the little-known cult comedy series *Double the Fist*, based on a mock format of a reality extreme-sports show.

All of these winners have followed their promising short films with subsequent original material that has showed a development in the artist.

For most winners, they are never heard from again. They are secured jobs with television advertisement production companies, and cease producing pieces of original artistic work.

Whilst it is difficult to write something of profundity in seven minutes, it is possible, as *Silencer* did this year and as Gregor Jordan, Paul Fenech and others have shown before, to create a film which is poignant, sincere and unpredictable.

Every year the festival has its quota of punch line films, as well as films too eccentric for the creator's motive and films with simple stories and simplistic moral lessons. Every year there is also a film that has it all: hilarity, drama, suspense, and poignant content.

This year that film was *Last Stop*, about a tramload of Melbourneites' paranoia when a man of undetermined ethnicity leaves a small bag on the tram upon getting off. This was one of two films in the night with a climax. Its simple, yet utterly non-simplistic storyline left me thinking that this film fully deserved to win so much more than any other.

But the judges proved that cheap laughs are a more valuable currency at Tropfest than meaningful themes or clever subversion of film genres and conventions, by awarding victory to *Carmichael & Shane*.

Tropfest is in danger of losing the credibility it once held in the mid- to late 1990s if it persists on honouring tawdry one-gag films like *Carmichael & Shane*. ■

Jarhead

Alex Dietrich

After many years and quite a few brilliant (and not so brilliant) productions, the war genre has become increasingly difficult to keep fresh.

The sensory overload of explosions, whizzing bullets, and "Johnny - I've been hit!" calls are not enough to maintain interest in an increasingly desensitised audience. Originality has been lacking and as such, I had low expectations when I went to see *Jarhead*.

With this in mind, it was a pleasing experience that this movie wasn't a tasteless rehash of something similar to *Hamburger Hill* designed for the Iraqi conflict.

Based on the identically titled memoir by ex-US Marine Anthony Swofford, or "Swoff" (Jake Gyllenhaal), *Jarhead* is directed by Sam Mendes (*American Beauty*, *Road to Perdition*). The film provides an introspection into Swoff's mind, a third-generation American fighter as he develops from green enlistee to cynical war veteran.

Paired up with friend Troy, Swoff becomes part of a sniper unit that is sent to the first Iraqi-American conflict of 1990. Contrary to the exciting village helicopter clip from *Apocalypse Now* - the scene the unit enjoys moments before shipping out - Swoff quickly discovers the troubling realities of his predicament.



see

A portion of time is spent by Mendes analysing the time soldiers experienced in the desert before hostilities officially began. The everyday boredom, frustration, and tension manifest themselves in moments of either partial insanity or comic relief.

When the war does start, Swoff's experiences are that of friendly fire casualties by jets more reminiscent of angels of death than friendly "buddies in the sky" and the "highway of death" - an Iraqi road where civilians and soldiers alike attempting to escape were massacred by Allied aircraft.

The sensory overload we've come to expect from war movies is replaced by more complex imagery of a stricken land and bent characters such as Staff Sgt Sykes (Jamie Foxx) who professes his love of the Marines, sitting next to a corpse while being rained on by a burning oil well.

While it is clear that Sam Mendes has achieved more strik- »



« ing accomplishments in films such as *American Beauty*, *Jarhead* is an intelligently crafted analysis of conflict, with well-portrayed, realistic characters and a polished script – just don't go expecting to get a fix of explosions. ■

Capote

Toby Halligan

Truman Capote (Phillip Seymour Hoffman) is a fat, flamboyant gay man with a voice reminiscent of Peter Sellers' finest caricatures from the *Goon Show*, rather like *Woroni's* editor-at-large Matthew Laing. He's also one of America's most famous authors and was for a time the darling of New York's cultural elite.

The film begins with an entire family being brutally murdered in an otherwise unremarkable small town in Kansas. Capote goes in his capacity as a journo for the *New Yorker* to write about the murders. He takes a while to ingratiate himself with the locals, but once they've gotten over his strange voice it becomes clear to dear Truman that the story is worth more than just an article. Thus he begins the process of writing *In Cold Blood*, a work that pioneered the non-fiction novel, made him the most famous living author in the United States, and also drove him to alcoholism.

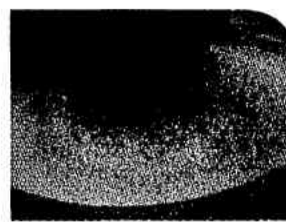
As the story unfolds Capote becomes close to one of the two men convicted for the murders, Perry Smith (Clifton Collins Jr) and the relationship between the two men changes both and reveals the darker strains of Capote's character.

By the end of the film there has been a role reversal. Smith turns from cold killer into a victim of Capote's obsession with his writing and Capote has turned from a commentator and friend to a cold manipulator. Capote's relationship

with his muse destroys him, with Harper Lee (Catherine Keener) serving as a narrative conscience, in the end forcing an almost comatose Capote to accept that he is not an observer but an intimate, indeed vital, part of Smith's life.

Hoffman is excellent, especially when you consider that his previous cinema credits have included dubious roles like Ben Stiller's obnoxious friend in *Along Came Polly*. What makes the performance remarkable is not the fact that he was "like really gay" but that he drags the viewer through the spectrum of emotions, from watching him charm high society to being repulsed by his conduct towards the end. Smith is strong has well though if the film lacks anything it's the failure to explore in much depth why he became a murderer. To a degree the film portrays Capote too harshly, the only insight we gain into his background come from his own mouth.

I suspect that was not the goal of the director and to be frank the film was good enough that the lack of context doesn't undermine its focus. I haven't seen a film that explores a writer's relationship with his muse so well, perhaps because Capote's story is so remarkable in and of itself. If you need explosions to keep you excited then I'd avoid this one, but it's one of the best explorations of character I've ever seen. ■



cd

Arctic Monkeys, *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not*

Ben Hermann



Arctic Monkeys may possibly have surrounding them the highest degree of hype and expectation

of recent rock history since the Vines reintroduced rock to the mainstream back in 2002.

NME has voted *Whatever People Say* number five in its Top 100 British Albums of All Time. Coming in right behind *Never Mind the Bollocks* and above anything by the Clash, the Beatles, or Radiohead, the Arctic Monkeys debut certainly has created an unprecedented largesse of excitement, especially seeing as the album had not even been released when the NME poll was conducted.

But unlike the Vines whose larger-than-life sound and style was exaggerated in the minds of critics and fans partly because radio had been drowned with nu-metal for the previous seven years, Arctic Monkeys' post-punk/indie/dance-rock style has been able to obtain such critical acclaim even amongst contemporary rock heavyweights such as the Strokes, Franz Ferdinand, Kings of Leon and the Libertines.

What makes this album so enjoyable is that the band's youth, energy and sense of humour give them an edge over any of the abovementioned groups.



Cynical of the elitism and exclusion of the British music scene, the lyrics are simple and relate to everyday experiences and subjects in a very similar vein to the Streets: girls and slappers on "I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor" and "Still Take You Home"; evading the British bobbies on "Riot Van"; and the seedy nightclub scene on "From the Ritz to the Rubble".

Musically the album is not at all groundbreaking. The band capitalises on the recent convergence of dance beats and rock riffs on "The View From the Afternoon" and "Dancing Shoes". Apart from that, the heavy distortion and fast pace of many of the songs means their sound is more powerful and downright rocking than the Strokes, while the tightness of the whole album means it lacks the sleazy, drug-fucked sound of the Libertines.

This album is definitely of high quality; just don't let it go to your head like those dramatic music-nerds over at NME. ■

The Artful Dodger, *It's All About the Stragglers* (2001)

Saad Hafiz

.....
I really shouldn't bother reviewing this CD.



Most of you should pop by Dick Smith, and buy it for the grand total of five dollars. Or better yet, download it using Bit Torrent, and make your own decision.

You see, I was thinking the other day – a rare occurrence – and realised, what the hell is the point of a music review? Everyone has different tastes, and music is such a large and varied art form, that no two people can ever like exactly the same range of music.

Reviews are simply an expression of the reviewer's own personal feelings regarding the subject matter, and are often biased, indicating the reviewer's tastes and preferences. And, if you are curious about something, then get off your arse, and listen to it, see it, read it, or whatever.

If I have been successful, you will now be turning the page, believing this review to be quite pointless. And you would be right, because it is. Simply put, there is no way you will not like the Artful Dodgers' masterpiece *It's All About the Stragglers...* even if you do have to pay five dollars for it. Believe me, you get your money's worth.

2 Step Garage was the defining electronic music genre of the late 1990s. In fact, I will go a step further and say it was the defining genre of the late 1990s. However, it was quickly done to death, and producers moved onto bigger – but sadly not better – things.

This CD is always in my car, and I have been listening to it almost every day since it was released in 2000. And that is because garage (pronounced "garridge") is my favourite style of music, and is the best. (That's my bias coming across. Remember, readers, this is not an objective review.)

Sure the songs contains the familiar "skippety skip skip" breakbeats of the 2 Step genre, and elitists may think "been there, heard that". To them I say, "Go and eat a tub of mouldy yoghurt." Elitism has no place in music, and good music is good music.

Stand-out tracks include "Movin' Too Fast", "Re Rewind (The Crowd Say Bo Selecta)", and "Please Don't Turn Me On".

The album has a lot of collaborations, which you can read about on the internet. The best track, though, by far is "R U Ready", featuring MC Allistair. It is the most perfect song I have ever heard, with rhythm, melody, chords, and



arpeggios all blending together to create a sparse sound that sounds pleasantly full.

The lyrics are also filled with smatterings of profundity. For example: "Wa wa, ye ame allah, me apaturne with a girl like shabba, acome dapa, R'n'B vocalist come rapper, with the Artful Dodger!"

I have no idea what that means either. But it's good to listen to nonetheless.

This CD is old now. And cheap. Buy it. Listen to it. Be blown away by sexy vocals, wicked rhodes licks and chords, pumping organ bass lines, and skippy drums. Nuffin else comes close. Me say rewind bo selecta!

Saad Hafiz (pictured) is Chief Economist with the ANZ Bank.



Me Tarzan. Let's root.

Anonymous Bloke scratches himself, then sets the record straight on claims that social pressures lead to planned, expected, unsatisfying sex

Many people have slept with someone and afterwards thought, how did that happen?

I propose to solve that mystery for you, Anonymous Feminist, and others, once and for all, right here: you got randy and you fucked someone. Simple, isn't it? I didn't even need an Arts degree to put that together!

Biological urges

So why does it happen?

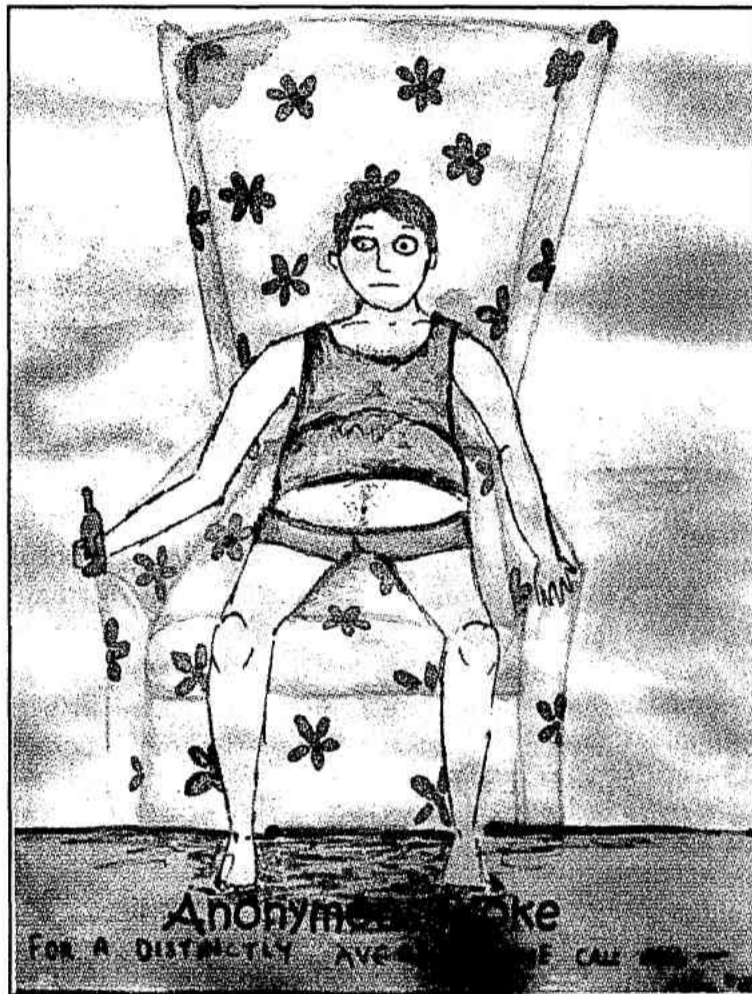
Anonymous Feminist claimed in the last issue of *Woroni* that there is a social expectation that after you get to a certain level of intimacy then sex should follow.

NO!

It may be the social experience, but it is not a social expectation. It's a biological one: you snog someone and you get randy because your body expects that you are going to be rooting soon. Your body can be hard to ignore, so given a willing partner, you root. Simple.

Next time you are thinking of doing anything because of social expectation, consider this: It's in your head. It is probably your body tricking your mind to make sure you get laid.

I've never heard of dreadful repercussions for not shagging after a pash. I personally reserve the right not to shag every chick I pash, and by the authority vested in *Woroni* I grant that right to you, too. I'm not saying that I'm an advocate of snogging and running. Not at all. If anything you should probably root more people, but



only if and when you want to.

Next time you snog someone and don't want to root them, just say no, soak up the ego-stroking seduction attempts, and tell them, "Maybe next time."

If they don't respect your choice to not to shag, whether male or female, they're a dickhead.

It is important that you have sex with someone because you want to rather than because you think you should. Again, no BA needed to come to that conclusion. The results of the brief, informal survey I conducted also confirm that this is a commonly held view.

I will admit that there a slut/stud double standard persists. I don't agree that it is legitimate, but acknowledging it, and acting within its influence, only serve to perpetuate it. Ignore it. Declare

that it is your body and you will do with it what you please, as often (or not) as you please and with whom you please. That is empowerment. Nothing at all to do with being a slut or a stud.

Sometimes...

Sometimes you'll fuck someone and they will ignore you afterwards. I've been that bloke. I've also fucked chicks who ignored me afterwards. (I wasn't that bad, was I?)

Sometimes fucking simply doesn't involve an afterwards. And nor need it.

As long as the two (or more) participants get that, then there shouldn't be any problem.

Sometimes there is an afterwards, but it shouldn't be based on real or imagined obligation. It should be because you genuinely afterwards.

Best wishes to Anonymous

I hope this offers some guidance to all the girls out there who are struggling with some imaginary social expectation. Ignore it. Go forth and fuck, or not. It is entirely up to you.

And to Anonymous Feminist, I hope this might help you achieve the unselfconscious, relaxed, dripping wet, legs behind your head, up against a wall, tantric, multiple orgasmic sex you desire. If not, perhaps you and I should get in touch.

I might not even ignore you afterwards. ■

BITTS & BITCHES

Reversing 40 km on the Hume Highway

A man has been charged with "reversing further than necessary" after he drove in reverse for forty kilometres on the Hume Highway.

None of the car's forward gears work.

Arrested at Benalla, he allegedly admitted to having a further ninety kilometres to go to his hometown of Numurkah.

He has also been charged with driving without a licence and driving an unregistered vehicle.

Writing on the wall

A Japanese thief who wrote an apology to his victim has been arrested after police recognised the handwriting.

The 51-year-old construction worker from Misato is heavily in debt, according to NHK television.

In his letter he apologised and returned the ¥15,000 (\$A172) stolen from his 78-year-old victim.



The pair had a whirlwind marriage on the Ten network's *Enola Gay* of TV ratings, *Marty and Jess: An Outback Wedding*.

Labor 'can still win'

John Howard has claimed the Labor Party could still win the 2007 election.

Bin Ladin reality TV

In a blatant case of misleading headlines, Osama bin Laden's niece, Wafah Dufour Bin Ladin, will appear in a reality TV show.

Being related to one of history's greatest mass murderers doesn't make someone unsexy, as photos (above) in January's issue of men's magazine *GQ* proved.

And now she has signed up to take part in a reality TV show about her life.

Eager to start a career in the infidel music industry, she cites U2, Depeche Mode, and The Cranberries among her influences, according to Reuters.

Bachelor romance proves ephemeral

If viewers of *The Bachelor* were capable of reading we'd warn them to stop now.

The latest series in the US saw casualty doctor Travis Stork select kindergarten teacher Sarah Stone on 28 February.

On 6 March the couple jointly announced a split.

In other news, Marty and Jessica from Australia's *Big Brother* 2002 season remain divorced.

Guns don't kill people; infants do

A three-year-old boy has shot his mother in the knee with a 9mm handgun.

The incident, in the US town of St Paul, is a reminder of the danger small children present to us all.

After the child had picked up the gun earlier in the day, the unnamed mother emptied the gun, but missed one chamber.

She then returned the gun to the couch.

Police warn that she remains capable of bearing more children.

Hooker FM

Are you a struggling student interested in media studies? São Paulo may have just the answer.

The Association of Prostitutes has won a licence to broadcast in the Brazilian city.

The station will discuss matters of occupational health and safety, human rights, and the social questions prostitution arouses.

Brazil is regularly condemned by international groups as a sex tourism haven.

ANU students looking to earn some cash, horrify their parents, or learn techniques to speed their ascent up the corporate ladder will be glad to hear that the government has dismissed all such criticism. ■

The

Man sues doctor; claims 'fully sick' his intellectual property

A 28-year-old Sydney man is suing his general practitioner for using the phrase "fully sick".

Abdul Bin Dul claimed, "Mate, I fully started the 'fully sick' craze back in, like, '98. Me and my mates were bored of shit like 'cowabunga' and 'radical', that shit's, like, shit.

"So one day my bro Sammy said to me, 'Man we need a phrase that turns conventional wisdom on its head,' and it just came to me. *Fully sick*. It was sick, mate. I've been using it ever since."

The GP in question, Gerald Anderson, for his part claims to have only intended to use the phrase to describe Bin Dul's symptoms.

"Abdul came to me with a cold. Apparently he needed to participate in a gang fight the next day

and he asked me how bad the cold was. I told him it was bad.

"He didn't seem to understand, so I decided to use terminology I thought he would understand. I said to him, 'Abdul, you are fully sick - not partially, not slightly. Fully!'

"Now he's taking me to court."

A spokesperson for the Australian Medical Association expressed concern.

"We can't have people just running around claiming that every word they use is theirs. Besides, I was totally using 'fully sick' before



'98."

Bin Dul for his part has indicated that he intends to copyright several other phrases he believes are his, including "totally ill", "utterly disabled", and "comprehensively incapacitated".

HD student feigns nonchalance

Friends of Herbert Laing (3rd year Arts/Law) have tired of his constantly claiming he doesn't do any study.

Despite being a straight-HD student, Laing claims to spend all of his time "at the pub, playing table tennis and eating corn chips".

Eliza Stuart, a friend from Burton and Garran Hall, said, "It's great that Herb gets good marks but I just wish he'd stop going on about how little work he does.

"If I hear that story about how he topped Corporations Law while sleeping through every class one more time I'm going to urinate in his sink."

Andrew Simmons, one of Herbert's Arts lecturers says, "Yeah, I remember Herb - he'd come to tutes and ask me questions about the inherent contradictions in neo-liberal theory. He'd preface each question with 'I haven't done the reading but...'"

Laing maintains that he never works.

"Yeah, I just don't know how I get through, this one time I did like an exam while high on cocaine, some of that stuff was like whacked. I kept bursting out laughing and eating corn chips, I just don't know how I got an HD, man."

IN BRIEFS

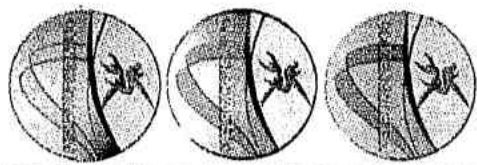
Socialist blames continuing virginity on global capitalism

Complaints about clichés now clichéd

Third-world nation adds "Democratic" to name; cannibalism still rampant

Ban RU486 as 486 is new number of Beast: Abbott

Well-dressed man unattractive naked



MELBOURNE 2006

CELEBRATE MEDIOCRITY IN SPORT

Rwandan runner realises gold medal has no chocolate inside

MELBOURNE, RECENTLY—Ubutu Nawanda's pleasure at winning the ten kilometre final turned to disappointment when he found that contrary to his coaches claims the medal was in fact made of gold and not chocolate.

"I'm hungry, I need food," said Nawanda as track officials beat him away from the Australian buffet.

Nawanda said he was pleased to have won but had been hoping to enjoy more than his typical half cup of rice washed down with water at his victory celebrations.

He noted Australia's obesity problem and expressed sympathy for those Australians suffering from a surplus of food.

"It really puts things in per-



Above The Australian team's barbecue under careful guard

spective. I mean, my whole family died of starvation but seeing all these fat people I really get how

insignificant my problems are.

"Are you going to finish that museli bar?"

BITCHERIFIC



There's something fun about bitching. Whether it be the process of complaining to another and gaining the satisfaction of hearing them say, "They did *what* with the photocopier?" Or hearing another tell sordid stories of people misbehav-

ing or doing dreadful things.

If you've read "ANU Student Watch" you'll already know that *Woroni* heartily approves of a bit of gossip, and this column aims to help students turn ordinary bitching into something more powerful.

Are you pissed off at the Stu-

dents' Association? Did you get beaten up at a club? Did your boss do something atrocious? Have the police infringed your rights? Are you just generally an angry person who wants to complain?

Send a letter to Bitcherific via <woroni@anu.edu.au>. We'll print your pain.

Commonwealth Games

Belize plans for first aquatic gold at Games; invests in running water

Scot wins 100 metres at Games; proudly world's 84th fastest man

Botswana national wealth grows by 10% following gold medal win

Athletes from Nauru mistakenly sent home as Iraqi asylum seekers

Pakistan, India teams brawl over ownership of Cashmere sweater

Gay rumours abound as Ian Thorpe pulls out of Games

Australia tops medal tally, remains world's second fattest nation

Kenyan team hunger strike goes unnoticed

Fighting the cause monkeys

Toby Halligan, despite being an occasional cause monkey himself, offers advice to evade people with ideals, petitions, and koala-saving fundraisers

I hate people trying to hand out pamphlets and sell shit at uni or in Civic.

They try to make you sign up for Hump the Whale International or make you come along to a lecture on "Why the war in Afghanistan is an example of evil capitalist dung beetles at work". And don't forget the homeless dudes in Civic who want you to buy art they've drawn on a pizza box with their own faeces.

Now, to be honest I'm one of those people. I'm a student politician and a wanker, so for a full week of my year I stand around trying to give people I otherwise do not care about a pamphlet on why I'm the shit. The result is I've seen some truly hilarious techniques for avoiding such "cause monkeys", techniques I pass on to you today.

The first thing to remember is that the fundamental goal of a cause monkey is time wasting.

They are attempting to steal your valuable eating, sleeping, and drinking time with mundane questions and requests or attempts to convince to care about how Kenyans are doing bad things to each other and trees look nice. If you care about this shit investigate it yourself, and that way you need never rely on a cause monkey. Plus, if they approach you, you can scream, "Hey, I gave five dollars to the Fuck a Tree Foundation."

In the unlikely even that this doesn't work, here's what you do.

■ **Duck and weave.** As you approach the cause monkey, radically alter the direction in which you

are walking, then alter it again begin to bob up and down and start running wildly with your arms flailing.

This tactic works best in a group, like a large shoal of mullets the constant movement confuses the predator and makes it difficult to pick out an individual student. They may also think you are crazy – always a good thing.

■ **Carry your own material.**

Go into a used car dealership, mobile phone stall, or take away food place and take a large stack of their promotional material. The minute someone approaches you attempting to speak to you or give you something interrupt them and start selling them about the merits of a 1972 Toyota Corolla or just start reading the Pizza Hut menu.

If they want to give you a pamphlet insist on giving them one of your own. Once they've accepted it, demand money.

■ **Be naked.** No one is going to approach a random naked person walking through Union Court.

"Besides," the cause monkey will ask themselves, "where could they store the pamphlet, and do I want my counter-revolutionary material going there?"

NOTE: May draw unwanted attention from insects, sex-starved law students, and police officers.

■ **Abandon basic hygiene standards.** If you're really concerned, don't wash for a week, urinate on your shoes, and carry a small bag of faeces ready to be hurled at an aggressive pamphleteer.

NOTE: May not deter socialists.

■ **Don't speak the language.**

If someone approaches you, start screaming at them in ancient Hebrew, Indonesian, or Latin. Never compromise, even if they persist and become aggressive.

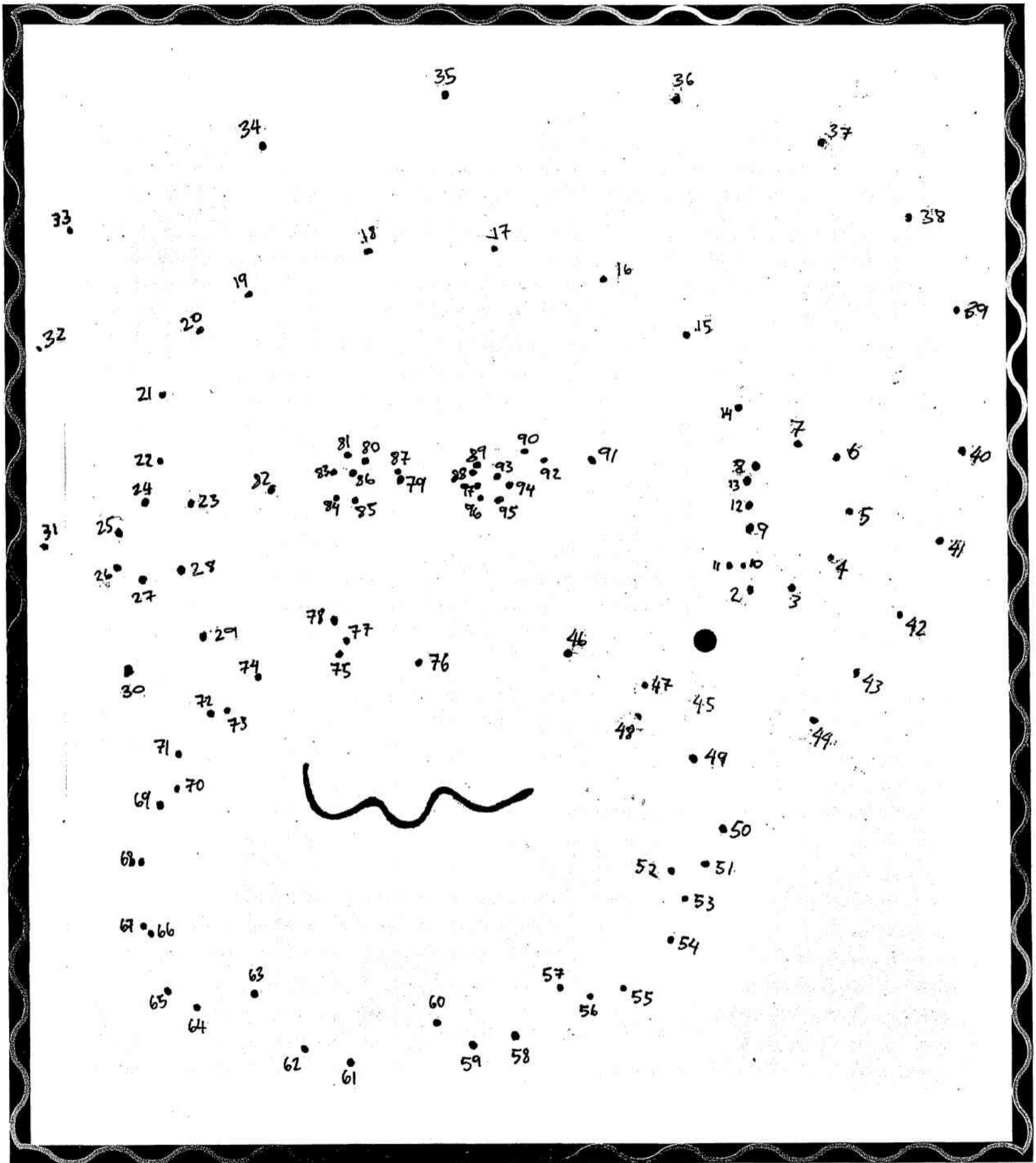
NOTE: May not work on the Jewish society, Indonesians, or Latin scholars. The answer? Blend the languages, thus becoming even more confusing.

So there you go. None of the above are guarantees, but I hope they help.

If it still doesn't work try combining the above suggestions – imagine a large group of naked people ducking and weaving through Union Court or reading the menu of Pizza Hut as you throw your own faeces at a Latin scholar. It's genius. ■



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Hey, kids! To find out which prominent Mohammed has been in the news recently, just connect the dots! (The answer's over the page!)

classifieds

To get your club or society's details in the Classifieds, please get in touch via the contact details on page 4.

Notice of Ordinary General Meeting— To be held on Thursday, 23 March 2006 in the Karmel Rooms at 2.00pm.

Items may be added to the agenda through an email to the General Secretary at <sa.gensec@anu.edu.au>. Agenda closes Friday, 17 March 2006 at 5.00 p.m. and will be available from the General Secretary.

This notice has been authorised by ANUSA.

anime.au—Canberra's largest Japanese animation events organisation will be running a free public screening of Japanese animation in the heart of Canberra's CBD – Garema Place.

The screening will take place on Garema Place's prominently positioned glass fibre cinema screen. Not only is this screen very well placed, it is also an architectural beauty: it won the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) Art and Architecture Award in 2000 as well as the NAWIC Achievement in Design Award in 2001.

The screening will take place on Friday, 7 April, 6–10 p.m.

ANU Economics and Commerce Students' Society (ECS)—The ECS aims to promote the inter-

ests of economics and commerce students within the university and create a discourse with the wider industry.

We hold both social and corporate events, our main ones being the Commencement Dinner, Corporate Cocktails, ECS Careers Day, ECS Ball, and barbecues. Our upcoming event, Corporate Cocktails, will be held on Wednesday, 22 March at Vivaldi's.

For more information about the ECS or our events, see <http://anuecs.anu.edu.au>.

ANU Resistance Club—The aims of Resistance are to help bring into being a socially equal, democratic, and ecologically sustainable socialist world and to organise, educate, and mobilise young people to this end.

The ANU Resistance Club will be organising campaigns against the war in Iraq, including protests around the visit of UK PM Tony Blair, building solidarity with the revolution in Venezuela, and fighting Howard's attacks on workers and students.

If you want to help out call 6247 2424, email <canberra@greenleft.org.au>. For more information, email the ACT Network Opposing War <act_now_

canberra@yahoo.com.au>, visit our website at <http://www.actnow.canberra.net.au/>, or come to a Students Against War meeting every Tuesday, 1 p.m. at the ANU Student Association.

Australian Intersivity Debating Championships— The Australian Intersivity Debating Championships is running a massive debating tournament over the Easter long weekend (13–16 April).

More than 300 uni students from around the country will come to Canberra to debate, adjudicate, and generally make merry. We'll be holding parties at ANU Bar, the Yarralumla woolshed, and several other choice locations.

If you're staying in the accommodation then registration is \$240 for debaters and \$215 for adjudicators, but if you don't need accommodation there's a big discount of \$100 (\$140 for debaters and \$115 for adjudicators).

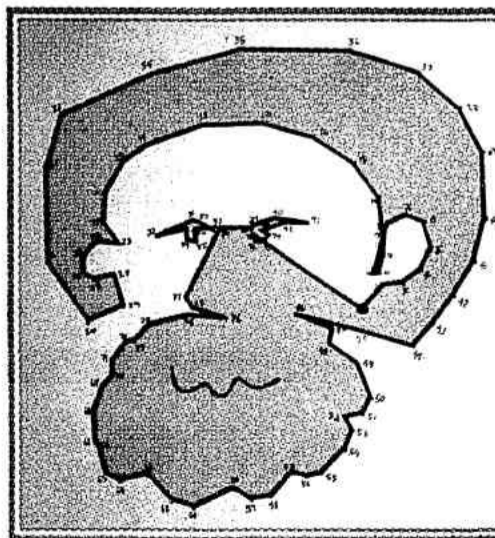
If you haven't debated before that's fine – it's a chance to meet and party with a bunch of cool cats from around the country.

If you want to come along send an email to <anueasters2006@hotmail.com>

Tony Blair protest—On Tuesday, 28 March British Prime Minister Tony Blair will be coming to Canberra to meet PM John Howard and address the Australian Parliament.

Mr Blair's visit is an opportunity for people of conscience to stand up against the great crime of our time, to demonstrate against the war in Iraq, and to bring the troops home.

You can show you support by coming to the protest, Tuesday, 28 March 10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. on the lawns of Parliament House.



Kidz Korner solution
That's right, kids!
It's Bangladesh's
star spin bowler
Mohammed Rafique!

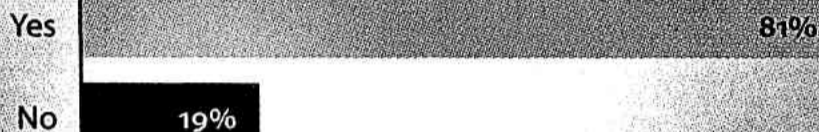


ANU by the numbers

As part of a series, *Woroni* Humour Editor **Toby Halligan** hit Union Court armed with a survey. Drugs, free speech, market day... you revealed all.

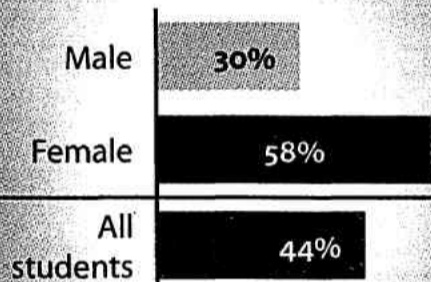
Free speech

- Do you think Tony Abbott should have the right to speak on campus?



Fat-free

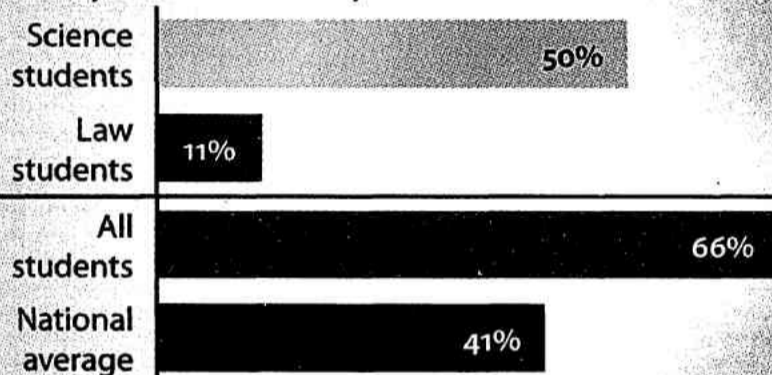
- Do you find fat people attractive?



- 100% of Software Engineering students find fat people attractive

Traffic

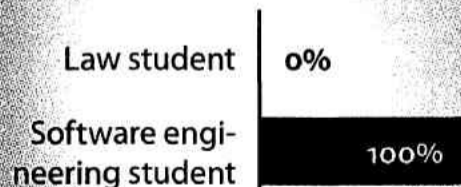
- Have you ever tried marijuana?



- 100% of Environmental Resource Management students claim to have tried cocaine

Copycat

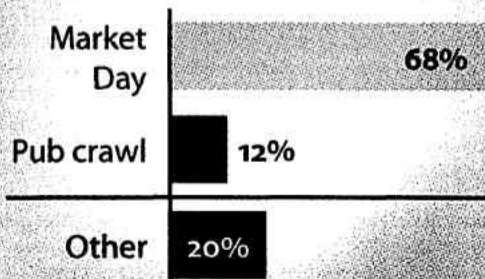
- Have you ever plagiarised?



- We note that 100% of Software Engineering students find fat people attractive *and* plagiarise

O-Week

- What's the best O-Week event?



Survey ideas

If you have ideas for questions to ask of your fellow students, you can email them to [<woroni@anu.edu.au>](mailto:woroni@anu.edu.au)

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